

**NEWS: PENTAX SHOWS
NEXT FLAGSHIP DSLR**



**NIKON 1 SERIES
GOES UNDERWATER**

Saturday 19 October 2013

amateur photographer

THE WORLD'S NO.1 WEEKLY PHOTO MAGAZINE

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PENTAX K-3

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Has it been worth the wait?
New top-end enthusiast DSLR

BLACK & WHITE



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STUNNING PORTRAITS

How to shoot amazing b&w
portraits with just natural light

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Michael Kenna's graphic
and high-contrast images

WHAT CAMERA SHOT THIS?

AP tests a **very** unusual
camera that's surprisingly
good for landscapes

- Legendary brand optics
- Large 20MP sensor
- Extra-large LCD screen
- Edit on the go



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D7100



I AM A THRILL-SEEKER



'Best DSLR we've tested' - Which? (Which?, Sept 2013)

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At the heart of the image **Nikon**



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Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

I DON'T have a favourite camera brand. As with music, I prefer the songs before the bands. There are plenty of cameras I love to use, and I appreciate the style and atmosphere of certain ranges. What sets one camera apart from the others are the unique characteristics of handling and quality that particular body designs, processors and optical arrangements afford.

My connection to one brand is no more or less than to another, and I wish that all manufacturers could enjoy the success they deserve: a success deserved by the efforts they put into not just innovation, but also to understanding the qualities we want in a camera, then delivering them. When

one manufacturer slips behind, for whatever reason, I am disappointed for the company, its heritage and for the users who are left wanting and unsatisfied.

So, I can't tell you how delighted I am that Pentax has come back to life. A product of the marriage of two companies I am very fond of, Ricoh and Pentax, the K-3 seems to be the camera we've been waiting for since the passing of the K20D. It might only be one new camera for Pentax, but it's a giant leap for Pentax users. And that makes me very happy.



Damien Demolder
Editor

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IN AP 28 SEPTEMBER WE ASKED...

Are Olympus users better off with an OM-D body than a new E-system camera?



YOU ANSWERED...

A No, E-system cameras are much better	30%
B No, OM-D bodies are too small	3%
C Yes, and image quality will be the same	7%
D Yes, the OM-D bodies are much better	19%
E I don't know	41%

THIS WEEK WE ASK... If you are a former Pentax user, is the K-3 enough to tempt you back?

VOTE ONLINE www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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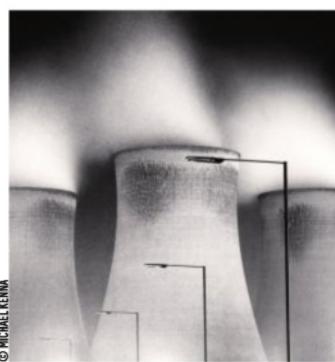
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See the remarkable black & white images of Michael Kenna

HOW TO HAVE YOUR PICTURES PUBLISHED IN READER SPOTLIGHT Send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.

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SONY

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APNews

News | Analysis | Comment | PhotoDiary 19/10/13



IMAGE COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S



It is one of only 11 known albums

Unseen Julia Margaret Cameron pics found, page 7



K-3 to boost Pentax DSLR range • Built-in anti-aliasing 'simulator'

PENTAX UNVEILS K-3 TO TAKE ON CANON AND NIKON

RICOH Imaging has launched the Pentax K-3 in a serious bid to pull photographers away from the two biggest-selling DSLR brands, Canon and Nikon. It is the third Pentax DSLR to be unveiled in four months.

Due out in November, priced £1,099.99 body only, the K-3 is billed as a 'significant upgrade' and aimed at dedicated enthusiasts and semi-professional photographers.

The K-3 features a new 24-million-pixel, Sony-made, APS-C-sized CMOS imaging sensor and a revamped, 27-point (25 cross-type sensors), SAFOX II AF system with a claimed minimum luminance of -3EV.

Pentax now has seven DSLRs, with the K-3 taking the K-flagship position, sitting above the 'mid-class' K-5II and K-5IIs in the range.

Features include an 86,000-pixel RGB light-metering sensor, a top ISO of 51,200 and a new 14-bit A/D conversion, Prime Engine II image processor.

Boasting a 'weather-resistant' build with 92 weather seals, the magnesium-alloy-bodied

K-3 contains a stainless-steel chassis and a dual SD card slot.

Other features include 8.5fps (frames per second) shooting and a 3.2in, 1,037m-dot screen – an area that Pentax says has improved since it was taken over by Ricoh two years ago.

Ricoh Imaging UK managing director Jonathan Martin said that, in the past, the firm may have 'let some of our users down' with a lack of SLRs in its line-up.

In an interview with AP, he added: 'The range has never expanded, but now... We are starting to be seen more as a player... Finally we have a serious range of products.'

Martin said that Pentax cameras are now back in 11 reopened Jessops stores, with plans to be in all 28 soon.

In a bid to boost image quality, by showing more detail, the K-3 does not have a low-pass filter on the camera's imaging sensor.

However, this leaves the image vulnerable to moiré effects, such as those seen when photographing striped clothes, for example.

To help combat this, the



K-3 features an anti-aliasing 'simulator' built into the camera's shake-reduction (SR) system.

Billed as a 'world first', users can adjust the anti-aliasing filter effect level to suit the subject.

Ricoh Imaging says this 'reduces the moiré effect by moving the SR unit at the sub-pixel level in a circular motion during image exposure'.

Microscopic vibrations are applied to the sensor to generate the 'same level of moiré reduction effect as an optical anti-aliasing filter'.

The K-3 does not have built-

in Wi-Fi, but it will be compatible with an optional Flucard.

This card is designed to enable remote control of the camera, wirelessly, using a smartphone up to 15 metres away, allowing the user to fire the shutter, alter focus points and enable the transfer of images to a mobile device where they can be viewed, for example.

The card, which is only compatible with the K-3 (it also accepts Eye-Fi cards) also serves as a traditional 16GB SD storage card.

SNAP SHOTS

STOP PRESS

As we went to press, Nikon unveiled a new full-frame DSLR, the D610. Priced £1,799.99, the D610 contains a 24.3-million-pixel, FX-format imaging sensor, 6fps shooting, and an ISO extendable to 25,600. Nikon says the D610 borrows its AF sensitivity from the firm's flagship professional D4 model. See next week's AP for more details.

- There is still no word on when a Kodak-branded compact system camera (CSC) will appear, with its maker missing the planned 'third quarter' launch date. The S1, which will adopt the micro four thirds format, was first announced in January and a model went on show at an event in China shortly afterwards. It is being developed under a licensing agreement with US company JK Imaging.



Do you have a story?

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ADOBE ADMITS 2.9M ACCOUNTS HACKED

IMAGE-EDITING software giant Adobe has confirmed that personal details of its customers, including names and 'encrypted' debit and credit card numbers, have been stolen by computer hackers.

In a blog, Adobe's chief security officer Brad Arkin said that the attack affects 2.9 million Adobe customers.

Arkin said he did not believe that the attackers had been able to access customers' encrypted debit and credit card numbers.

However, he believes they removed information including customer order details and debit and credit card expiration dates.

'We are working diligently internally,

as well as with external partners and law enforcement, to address the incident,' Arkin wrote.

Arkin said Adobe has also reset the passwords of affected customers.

It is not clear how many UK customers are affected. Adobe has yet to respond to a request for comment.

AP
THIS
WEEK
IN...

1917

The athletic prowess of press photographers was under the spotlight this week in 1917, with AP's Magpie columnist reporting that he had observed five pressmen on the steps of a fashionable London church, waiting for the departure of a newly married couple. In a piece entitled *Marvels of Agility*, Magpie wrote: 'The way in which they trained their cameras on the doorpost, and then, when the two poor victims appeared, fired the shot and simply bowled themselves out of the way so as to prevent any attempt at reprisals, was a lesson in athletics, to say the least.' He added: 'But then these eager men were only living up to their title, for it will be found that in the Fleet Street courts where these spry birds have their nests they call themselves the All-Alive Photo Co, or the Nimble-as-Needles Agency, or the Quick-Step Picture Service.'

Marvels of Agility.
The number of people who can publicly publish what they can do is limited, but within those limits they are reliable, at least fairly so. The same thing cannot be said of the letterpress. The fake which is easy in the paragraph takes some doing in the photograph. The penman can draw upon his imagination to a greater extent than a photographer can draw upon his negative.

Marvels of Agility.
The journalist with the pen need not be on the spot, but the journalist with the camera performance must be. And not only on the spot, but he has to show considerable agility in getting on and off again. The other day I watched five Press photographers on the high steps of a fashionable London church, waiting for the departure of a newly married pair. The way in which they trained their cameras on the doorpost, and then, when the two poor victims appeared, fired the shot and simply bowled themselves out of the way so as to prevent any attempt at reprisals was a lesson in athletics, to say the least. But then these eager men were only living up to their title, for it will be found that in the Fleet Street courts where these spry birds have their nests they call themselves the All-Alive Photo Co., or the Nimble-as-Needles Agency, or the Quick-Step Picture Service. And they have their triumphs as well as their triumphs. I searched all the papers diligently on successive days for the photograph of that married couple which five photographers racked their elbows and knees in order to secure, and I do not believe that it appeared anywhere.

His Preference.

But they have their reward, like the wicked—these men who go into six apoplectic fits per day. It is just past the quarter of a century since the first picture daily, the *Graphic*, was produced, and it is time that some meed of honour was paid to it. It looks through the view

Investors to receive more than \$2.6m

OLYMPUS TO PAYOUT OVER SHARE CRASH

OLYMPUS has agreed to pay more than \$2.6m to investors who sued the company in the United States when its share price crashed following the financial scandal.

Olympus's share price fell more than 70% in the weeks immediately following exposure of accounting irregularities in October 2011. The Japanese company says it has reached a 'memorandum of understanding' to settle the legal action, which was launched on 14 November 2011 by holders of American Depository Receipts (ADRs).

The settlement figure of \$2,603,500 (around £1.6m) is not yet finalised and will need to receive final court approval, Olympus said in a statement.

The statement adds that the plaintiffs claimed they were 'damaged by the drop in value of the ADRs as a result of the company's admission of making false financial statements about its financial condition and income in order to defer the posting of losses'.

The lawsuit was led by Chaitanya Kadiyala and Kelly Sharkey, and the settlement figure relates to all those who bought ADRs between 8 May 2007 and 7 November 2011.

Olympus says the payout will be treated



LEGAL ACTION THREATENED

as an 'extraordinary loss' in its accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014.

In April, it emerged that UK pension funds were among 68 parties suing Olympus for around £42 million following the £1.1 billion accounting cover-up revealed two years ago.

Pension funds run by Lloyds TSB Group, HBOS, Pearson Group, Shell, Nationwide and the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames were among corporate investors named in the lawsuit.

Britain's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is prosecuting Olympus over the scandal, which was exposed by former Olympus CEO Michael Woodford.

FLICKR HOSTS STREET PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

PHOTO-SHARING website Flickr has launched a street photography competition.

The contest, called In the 'Street: Europe in detail', aims to reveal what 'surprises,

delights and inspires you day to day, just by walking down your street'.

The best three pictures from the UK will feature in the 2014 Flickr Calendar, alongside winning images from France, Germany and Spain. Prizes also include a £500 voucher to spend on photo materials.

The contest will be judged by a panel that includes *Amateur Photographer* technical editor Richard Sibley, after a shortlist has been drawn up based on a public vote.

The 2014 Flickr Calendar group is open for submissions until 20 October 2013.

Three winners from each country will be announced on 19 November.

To enter, visit www.flickr.com/groups/calendar2014.



CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

GLoucester Camera Club

The club is staging its annual exhibition until 19 October at St John's Methodist Church Hall, Northgate Street, Gloucester. For details visit www.gloscameroclub.org.uk.

SNAP SHOTS

● Three former bodyguards of a Brazilian supermodel and a US football star are facing trial for allegedly shooting at two photographers after the couple's post-wedding party in Costa Rica. In 2009, Agence France-Press (AFP) photographer Yuri Cortez and a freelancer, since named as Carlos Aviles, had reportedly been taking pictures of Gisele Bündchen and Tom Brady from an 'adjoining property'. Neither photographer was hurt, but they claim that at least one of the bodyguards opened fire as they drove away, according to a report by AFP. The photographers had refused demands to hand over their cameras and memory cards. The bodyguards have reportedly been charged with attempted homicide. At the time, AFP claimed that one of the photographers was almost killed, with a bullet missing his head by 'just a few centimetres'.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S

Previously unrecorded photos discovered

UNSEEN IMAGES FOUND IN CAMERON ALBUM

A NEWLY discovered album of images by 19th century photo pioneer Julia Margaret Cameron contains a pair of previously 'unseen' portraits.

The two 'unrecorded' images, depicting the photographer's personal maid Mary Hillier, are among 32 'large-scale' portraits contained in an album found earlier this year.

Billed as a 'highly important' find, the album is expected to raise at least £250,000 when it goes on sale at Sotheby's in London on 10 December.

'It is one of only 11 known albums compiled by Cameron with her own

photographs and represents hours of meticulous work,' said a Sotheby's spokesperson.

The photographer put the album together for her nephew, the artist Valentine Cameron Prinsep, for his 31st birthday on 14 February 1869.

Sotheby's adds: 'The album contains carefully chosen portraits of her friends and family, including leading figures in Victorian society such as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Sir John Herschel and her goddaughter Julia Jackson (the mother of Virginia Woolf).'

The seller wishes to remain anonymous, according to Sotheby's.

LONDON PHOTO SHOW DATE CHANGED

A NEW photography show that was set to take place in London from 27-30 March next year has been moved to October 2014.

London Imaging Live was to have been the second photo show to take place in March 2014 (the first being The Photography Show), following the axing of the annual Birmingham-based Focus on Imaging event, which was traditionally held in the same month. London Imaging Live will now take place after the biennial trade show photokina on 16-21 September 2014 in Cologne, Germany.

AP understands that organisers decided to move London Imaging Live to mid-late October 2014 to allow a 'more staggered' calendar of photo events for next year.

Aimed at professional photographers and enthusiasts, London Imaging Live 2014 is billed as a not-for-profit showcase for 'the entire imaging industry' by its organisers, Life Media Group, the publisher of trade magazine *Pixel*.

Organisers say they still hope to stage the event at the ExCeL centre in east London.

Experts are set to offer 'technical, artistic and real-world advice on how to progress in your chosen field, gain commissions and build a career'.

The Photography Show is still on course to take place in Birmingham from 1-4 March 2014.

BRIAN MAY TO EXPOSE DIABLERIES FINDINGS

BRIAN May, guitarist with the band Queen, is set to reveal the results of his mission to uncover the origin of a rare series of 1860s French stereo cards, called Diableries.

May (pictured) has co-authored a book called *Diableries: Stereoscopic Adventures in Hell* and will give a talk about the project at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London on 1 November.

The event will mark the Halloween launch of the book, which May has written with photo historians Denis Pellerin and Paula Fleming.

The authors will present a 'Gothic Victorian underworld of temptation, seduction, retribution and devilish fun brought alive in colour and 3D', according to the Royal Photographic Society (RPS), which is organising the event.

The 280-page book, priced £40,



contains 500 photographs and will come with a stereo viewer designed by the musician.

The 3D presentation and lecture will give visitors the chance to learn about the 'origins and hidden meaning of these rare 1860s French photographs, which depict an imaginary underworld populated by devils, satyrs and skeletons', adds the RPS.

In an interview with AP in 2011, May explained how tissues feature a print on a piece of photographic paper, with colours

painted on the back. The viewer only sees colour when the image is held up to the light. Red gels are used for the devils' eyes.

'There's a magical transformation between what appears to be a daylight view... and a night-time view when you hold it up to the light,' he said.

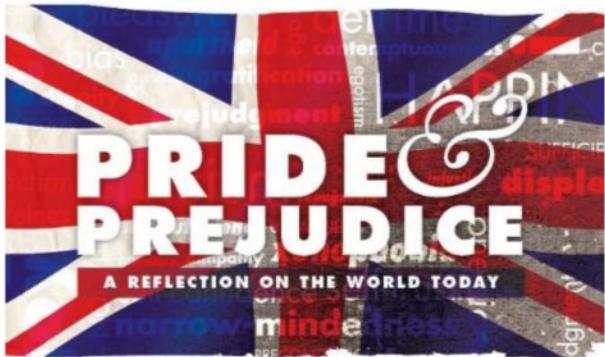
Tickets for the event at the Royal Institute of British Architects, which includes a book signing, cost £15.

To book, call the RPS on 01225 325 733 or visit www.rps.org/devils.

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Open to students of all ages

HARMAN LAUNCHES STUDENT PHOTO COMP

HARMAN has launched a student photography competition, called Pride & Prejudice (a reflection on the world today), that is open to people of all ages.

Entries can be printed on traditional black & white darkroom papers or inkjet paper.

Judges say they are looking for images that are technically excellent, provoke an emotional response and exhibit an understanding of the brief.

The brief instructs entrants to 'be inspired by the world around us... Draw inspiration from nature, lifestyle, art, music and culture'.

The competition is divided into two categories. The first, called Darkroom, requires entrants to submit a darkroom

print from a negative on Ilford or Kentmere b&w film, using Ilford or Kentmere papers.

Category two, Digital, is for digital images printed on Harman Crystaljet Elite RC Inkjet paper, minimum size A4.

Two winners, one in each category, will be awarded the title of Harman/Ilford Student Photographer of the Year 2013, have their winning image professionally printed and receive £150 of products from www.harmanexpress.com.

The contest is open to students taking a full or part-time course at a UK-based college, school or university.

Entries are open until 31 January 2014.

For details, visit www.harmantechology.com.

MAN GIVEN NEW BAIL DATE OVER CHILD PHOTOS



Committed to defending your photographic rights!

A MAN accused of taking indecent images of children at a bus station more than a year ago has been given a new date to answer bail, as police enquiries continue.

The unnamed suspect, who was 38 at the time, was arrested on suspicion of taking indecent photos of young girls at a bus station in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, on 13 August 2012.

He was due to answer bail again last month.

However, West Mercia Police spokesman Richard Ewels told AP: 'There has been an extension to bail. It has been put back while enquiries continue.'

The man is now due to answer bail towards the end of October, said Ewels.

Police have previously refused to explain why the man has been repeatedly rebailed, and rejected a Freedom of Information request lodged by AP on grounds that any information released would breach data-protection laws.

At the time of his arrest, police said the man had been seen taking pictures of the children using a mobile phone.

A member of the public initially reported the man to security staff at the bus station in Shrewsbury.

SNAP SHOTS

Two UK photographers have been shortlisted for the £12,000 Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2013. Spencer Murphy has been shortlisted for his portrait of jockey Katie Walsh, while Giles Price – a former Royal Marine Commando – was chosen for one of a series of images captured at the 2013 Kumbh Mela Festival in Allahabad, India. Also contending for the title, to be announced in November, are Iranian photographer Anoush Abrar and Dorothee Deiss from Germany.

London Camera Exchange Lincoln is holding the LCE Lincoln Photo and Optics Show 2013 on 6 November at The Drill Hall, Free School Lane, Lincoln, from 1pm-7pm. Photo enthusiasts will be able to try and buy kit, including the Nikon D800, Canon EOS 70D and Sony Alpha 99, and buy and sell second-hand gear at the free-to-enter event. There will also be free seminars and product advice. For details, visit www.lincolnphotoshow.com or call 01522 514 131.

In next week's AP

On sale Tuesday 22 October



FREE LED TORCH

We're giving away a free LED torch in next week's issue that will help you:

- Light up the pockets of your camera bag
- Add some brightness to your subject
- See your camera controls at night
- 'Paint' patterns and outlines in your images



HANDS-ON

PENTAX K-3

Richard Sibley takes a first look at the 24.3-million-pixel K-3 DSLR

APOY RESULTS

WIDEANGLE WORLD

In association with

Panasonic LUMIX G

We reveal the top 30 winners from round 8 of **Amateur Photographer of the Year**

AP **POY**
2013

AP EXPERT GUIDE TO...



TAKING HDR PORTRAITS

Lee Frost explains how to bring out the character of subjects in portraits using HDR



Sony Alpha Centres of Excellence

Richard Sibley speaks to **James Celliher** of the London Camera Exchange in Colchester

‘BEING A Sony Alpha Centre of Excellence, we stock a large range of Sony products so we always have cameras on hand to demonstrate to our customers,’ says James Celliher, assistant manager of LCE Colchester. ‘Most of the cameras are out on a dedicated display, so customers can come straight in and try out the latest models.’ The store also keeps a key range of genuine Sony accessories in stock, including batteries and screen protectors.

One of the main benefits to being an Alpha Centre of Excellence is that staff are kept up to date with all of the latest products and features. ‘We are regularly visited by a member of the Sony team,’ says James. This also provides staff with the opportunity to ask any questions about the products, and of course, all this information is passed on to customers when they need help and advice.

Several times a year, LCE Colchester also holds dedicated Sony in-store demonstration days, where customers can come in and speak to Sony experts about the latest cameras, such as the Sony Alpha 65, NEX-6 and Cyber-shot DSC-HX50. ‘It’s a fantastic compact camera, as is the new Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 II, which is also very popular,’ says James. The next demonstration day takes place on 7 December. Visit www.lcegroup.co.uk or contact the store for more information.



SONY **make.believe** **α** Centre of Excellence

Camera World	Chelmsford
Cardiff Camera Centre	Cardiff
Cardiff Camera Centre	Newport
Castle Cameras	Bournemouth
Devon Camera Centre	Exeter
Digital Depot	Stevenage
Great Western Cameras	Swindon
Harrison's	Sheffield
London Camera Exchange	Bristol (Horsefair)

London Camera Exchange	Chester
London Camera Exchange	Chesterfield
London Camera Exchange	Colchester
London Camera Exchange	Leamington Spa
London Camera Exchange	Manchester
London Camera Exchange	Southampton High Street
Pantiles Cameras	Tunbridge Wells
Park Cameras	Burgess Hill
Warehouse Express	Norwich

Wilkinson Cameras	Preston
Wilkinson Cameras	Southport
York Camera Mart	York
UK Digital Ltd	Clitheroe
Peter Rogers	Stafford
Bass & Blyth	Harrogate
Photo Express	Ulverston
Carlisle Sony Centre	Carlisle
TCR Sony Centre	London



AP hands-on

Nikon 1 AW1

The **Nikon 1 AW1** is the world's first waterproof digital interchangeable-lens camera, but how does it work? **Richard Sibley** takes a first look

WHEN I first held the new Nikon 1 AW1, it wasn't quite what I had been expecting. Usually, waterproof cameras come in a range of bright, garish colours, with thick rubber coatings and chunky plastic buttons. Not so the Nikon 1 AW1, as its appearance is very conventional. In fact, the camera is designed to look just as much at home taking street photographs or landscapes as it does taking underwater images.

FEATURES

Crammed inside the body of the AW1 is a 1in, 14.2-million-pixel CMOS sensor, with ISO sensitivity spanning ISO 160–6400. Like other recent Nikon 1-system cameras, the AW1 can shoot with continuous AF at a rate of 15fps, or without AF at 60fps, all at full resolution. However, it is what Nikon describes as the camera's 'adventure' features that are the most interesting.

As expected, the AW1 has GPS location tracking, but it also has something called GLONASS, an alternative to GPS. There is an altimeter.

which can be used to see exactly how high, or deep, you are, and there's a digital compass, which will be useful for the really adventurous, particularly if out shooting in the snow. An electronic level, in the form of a virtual horizon, has a more photographic use in helping to keep landscapes straight.

Besides these features, the AW1 operates as a normal Nikon 1-system camera, with modes such



AT A GLANCE

- 1in, 14.2-million-pixel CMOS sensor
- ISO 160-6400
- Waterproof to a depth of 15m
- Shockproof from heights of up to 2m
- Freezeproof down to -10°C

Right: The button layout is fairly conventional and we will find out in the full test just how easy the buttons are to use while wearing gloves

Below right:
Underneath the conventional looks of the AW1 is a camera that is waterproof, shockproof and freeze proof

Below: A large rubber seal sits around the AW1's lens mount and seals the camera body firmly against the rear of the new waterproof lenses



as full HD video and Smart Photo Selector, which takes 20 high-resolution images and recommends the best five. Sadly, there is no built-in Wi-Fi connectivity, although the Nikon WU-1 Wi-Fi module does allow Wi-Fi connection between the AW1 and a smart device. However, this accessory cannot be used underwater as it requires one of the doors on the side of the camera to be open.

BUILD AND HANDLING

The sturdy plastic body of the AW1 is waterproof down to a depth of 15m, shockproof from heights of up to 2m and freeze proof down to -10°C. At the AW1's launch, a Nikon representative demonstrated the camera's robustness by first submerging it in a fish tank, albeit a small one, and then dropping it numerous times from waist height. There was no discernible damage on either occasion. No doubt, with the weather getting colder over the next few months, we will soon have some cold conditions in which to test it.

As expected for a camera that's waterproof, shockproof and freezeproof, it is also resistant to dust. This is thanks to the seals that surround the body to prevent water ingress.

There are two waterproof lenses available for the camera – the 1 Nikkor AW 11-



27.5mm f/3.5-5.6 (30-74mm in 35mm equivalent) and the 1 Nikkor AW 10mm f/2.8 (27mm equivalent), a fast wideangle lens. The barrel of each extends so that it presses against the camera body. However, the actual waterproofing seal is based on a rubber band that sits just around the circumference of the lens mount. Lenses are mounted in the usual way, except that there is a lot more friction due to the rubber seals of the lens and camera meeting. The result is a firm waterproof grip between camera and lens.

Each of the new AW lenses can also be used on a standard Nikon 1 system camera, likewise standard Nikon 1 lenses, although they won't, of course, be waterproof.

The sensor has a layer of glass in front of it, presumably to protect the sensitive electronics more from humidity and dust than from water. The rear screen sits behind a second layer, this time of plastic, to add another layer of protection and to help avoid humidity.

A range of lockable doors prevents water reaching the rest of the camera. These allow access to the battery, memory card and camera input and output sockets, but when shut, the rubber seals close tightly and the door becomes a solid barrier against water.

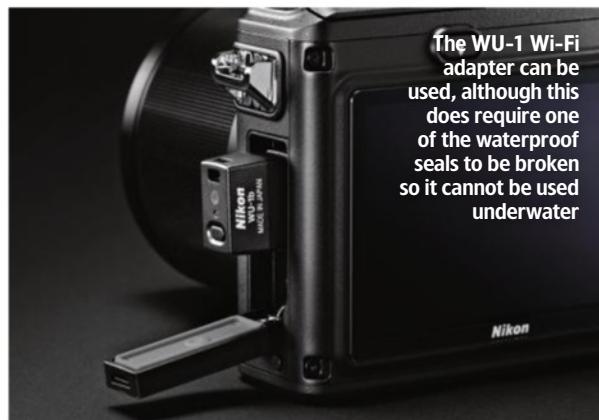
Using the camera is straightforward. There is a typical button arrangement on

Above right: The AW1 has a mode that uses the camera's built-in accelerometers to change camera settings by simply tilting the camera from one side to another, making it easier to operate underwater or while wearing thick gloves

the rear, with large, well-designed buttons that are easy to press and allow quick access to essential features. To change settings, the on-screen menu items are larger than on previous Nikon cameras so they can be seen underwater or in challenging conditions.

VERDICT

The AW1 is a far cry from the company's Nikonos underwater cameras of old, with their large plastic bodies and chunky buttons. This new Nikon underwater camera is discreet and isn't something you would be embarrassed to use at a social



'The AW1 is a far cry from the company's Nikonos underwater cameras of old'

gathering – it's not bright yellow and it doesn't look like it was designed for a child.

However, performance is more important than appearance. In this respect, Nikon has made a camera that enthusiast photographers can happily take anywhere. This means, for instance, that you can go on holiday unencumbered by an underwater compact camera and a compact system camera – just take the Nikon AW1. This, I'm sure, will prove appealing for many potential purchasers. Something else that doubtless will appeal is that as the AW1 is a small compact system camera, it is a fraction of the size of an equivalent DSLR kit, and is therefore less cumbersome to transport.

As for how the images from the camera look, we will have to wait until we fully test the camera in a forthcoming issue.

The Nikon AW1 goes on sale this month, price £749 with the 11-27mm lens or £949 with the 11-27mm and 10mm lenses. The 10mm lens can also be bought separately, price £299.99. **AP**

APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Jon Stapley



BOOK

Portrait of the Writer: Literary Lives in Focus

Foreword by Goffredo Fofi. Thames & Hudson, £24.95, hardback, 512 pages, ISBN 978-0-500-51717-8

GREAT writers portrayed by great photographers: if the idea appeals, and if you're the sort of person who loves the sound of a portrait of Samuel Beckett made by Henri Cartier-Bresson, then this wonderfully thick book will keep you poring over it for hours. More than 250 literary stars are encapsulated in 512 pages, with the photography varying from the stately and formal to inventive works that are approaching abstraction. On the writers' side, we've got Sylvia Plath, Kurt Vonnegut, Franz Kafka, Margaret Atwood and F Scott Fitzgerald. From the photography pool there is Man Ray, Pablo Picasso, Abbas, Bruce Davidson and Robert Doisneau. It's probably already obvious whether or not this is your sort of thing. If it is, we can recommend it without hesitation.



© PHILIPPE MARIN/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Joe Cornish and Alan Hinkes

25 October-23 November. Joe Cornish Galleries, Register House, Zetland Street, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 1NA. Tel: 01609 777 404. Website: www.joecornishgallery.co.uk. Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm. Admission free

THIS unusual meeting of minds has resulted in an intriguing exhibition. Landscape photographer of renown, Joe Cornish, brings a new collection of photographs depicting the North of England, while mountaineer Alan Hinkes shows images of his experiences more than 8,000 metres above sea level. It's

Wild Africa

By Alex Bernasconi. Papadakis, £40, hardback, 268 pages, ISBN 978-1-906-50631-5

AFRICA is 'one of the last natural paradises on earth,' states the author on the rear of this book. Fighting word, perhaps, but Alex Bernasconi's photography makes the case. The gorgeous double-page spreads littered throughout this book are often more remarkable for the softer side of Africa's



BOOK

EXHIBITION



exhaustively photographed flora and fauna they display. Eyes are often the points that draw our attention, and the large soulful eyes of predators and prey alike remind us of the living being that was staring down the barrel of Bernasconi's lens. *Wild Africa* isn't doing anything we haven't seen before, but it's doing what it does with skill and sincerity.

Another talented photographer produces another exquisite book.



© ALAN HINKES



www.photoextremist.com

IF YOU'RE bored of the same locations, setting your camera to the same aperture and pointing it in the same direction, a site like this might be just what you need. Evan of PhotoExtremist specialises in what the site name implies – tutorials in 'extreme' photography. The term really has a broad meaning as far as the site is concerned – it can refer to highly stylistic Photoshop effects or heading to a beach to set fire to steel wool and photograph the results. Updates could charitably be called sporadic. It's not a site you'll return to a lot, but the archive of tutorials doesn't seem to be going anywhere anytime soon and there's plenty to be getting on with.



© ALAN HINKES



an interesting mix. Cornish is, naturally, the more accomplished of the two, but the vistas and views in front of which Hinkes habitually finds himself simply cannot fail to be spectacular – such as the summit of K2 (above). The landscapes are rugged in a different sense, and complement each other surprisingly well.

subscribe 0844 848 0848

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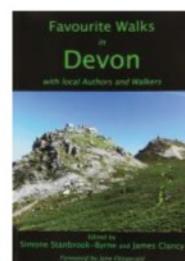


WEBSITE

© JEFF CORNISH

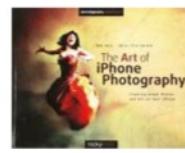
CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



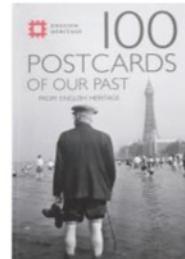
● FAVOURITE WALKS IN DEVON WITH LOCAL AUTHORS AND WALKERS

edited by Simone Stanbrook-Byrne and James Clancy, £6.99 A host of Devon's respected walkers – which is apparently a thing a person can become in Devon – have collaborated for this book of the best circular perambulations the county has to offer. There's a lot of decent photography that gives the chapters some welcome visual flavour, although it's not clear why so much had be monochrome. The half-page colour images do a much better job of showing off why Devon is worth walking around. ● **THE**



ART OF IPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

by Bob Weil and Nicki Fitz-Gerald, £34.50 Given the recent release of the iPhone 5s and its beefed-up camera, photography with the iPhone, already the most popular camera on Flickr, is set to become even more fashionable. This book does a decent job of providing ways to be creative with it, with a good selection of contributors. This goes some way towards excusing the alarming £34.50 asking price for such a thin book. ● **100 POSTCARDS**



OF OUR PAST

by English Heritage, £14.99 The past is a foreign country indeed. From the enormous archives of English Heritage comes a century of postcards depicting life from the late 19th century until the 1960s. Flipping through the stack feels like an entertaining non-chronological flipbook of everything odd, amusing, interesting and charming about the British. It's a pleasant distraction from the nagging question of to whom you're supposed to send these 100 postcards you've somehow acquired.

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Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

LETTER OF THE WEEK

RUSHING THE PROCESS

Regarding to the *Backchat* from Lee Osborne (AP 5 October) concerning the way in which smartphone technology may influence camera design and functionality in the future, I have thought on several occasions that it would be nice to be able to snap a subject and upload it 'to the world' immediately. However, it would not be an important factor when considering the purchase of a camera.

The idea of cameras where we take, view, edit, upload and then move on to the next subject leaves me rather cold. I feel this type of instant photography is more suited to camera phones, the importance of the images being that they are newsworthy and/or interesting, not that they have a great tonal range or composition. When we take photographs the idea is that we can view them with relaxed, unruled eyes and mind. Also, however large

a camera's LCD screen gets, it is not going to give the true type of representation that your PC or laptop will give the viewer.

I am no snob, and know my limitations, but I do know that when I have the chance to show my chosen subject in as good a light as possible, I will. I too upload images to several image-sharing sites, but not before I have made the photographs look as pleasing to the viewer as my talents allow.

Instantaneous uploading almost seems to be like rushing to the end of the photographic process, and that's not something that appeals to me. Taking images and getting to view those subjects that I, and my family and friends, enjoy has always been the key motivation. Appraisals from the outside world, if they come, are a happy coincidence, not the key to photography.

William BJ Spencer, via email

That's a great point, William. You show that there can be two completely different approaches to making pictures, although there's no reason one can't go back to a picture taken on a phone to edit it properly on a computer. That, though, may not be what we do most of the time – Damien Demolder, Editor



Write to...

'Letters' at the usual AP address (see page 3) fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateurphotographer@ipcmmedia.com

*Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address

Earn £50 Backchat

Send your thoughts or views (about 500 words) to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication

*IN A CHOICE OF COMPACT FLASH OR SDHC
NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK AND EU READERS ONLY

JOIN A CLUB!

Having been an avid amateur since the late 1960s (from Praktica to Canon EOS 35mm SLRs), and having made the move to digital in 2008 with a Canon EOS 450D so I could continue to use my Canon lenses, I began to lose my way with my photography and did not use the camera that much. It was only after an illness that hospitalised me for a while, and left me unable to return to work for a couple of years, that I once again took up the camera and started exploring the abilities of digital cameras and imaging software.

Still without much enthusiasm, I produced a few passable images and was content to leave it at that until my wife suggested that I go to an open meeting of the local photography group (Focus – Ryde Imaging Group on the Isle of Wight). Being a dutiful husband, I did what I was told and went to the meeting.

What a revelation! This was a group of like-minded individuals from all age groups. They were enthusiastic about their photography and happy to welcome potential new members with none of the 'you aren't one of us' attitude that I had previously found in a few clubs in London some years ago.

Having been made welcome by the group I had no hesitation in joining, and at the next meeting entered two images into that month's competition, which was to be judged by a local professional photographer. The result was surprising, as both my images made the final six selected from about 30 pictures entered, with one image finishing in sixth place and the other winning the competition!

The other members were genuinely pleased that I had done so well and informed me that I now had to maintain that standard in the hope of winning the annual points contest outright. There was no issue about a 'newcomer' being perceived as not being part of the group, only encouragement to continue to do well and to expand my photographic horizons.

My enthusiasm for my photography has been renewed and I am now looking forward to getting out and about to produce images for the next competition. I also intend to go on a course to expand my editing skills in Photoshop.

I hope that my experience will encourage others to join local clubs that have a similar ethos. As I have discovered, club photography has the ability to motivate and improve the abilities of many photographers. **Robert Mowat, Isle of Wight**

I suspect you and Brian Young (see right) are working together on this! – Damien Demolder, Editor

FLASH FOR E-500

While I am in complete agreement with Chris Gatcum's reply to Sam Russell's question (Ask AP, AP 28 September), especially concerning the danger of the Olympus FL-40, he has overlooked a superb flash range that will work perfectly

What The Duck



with Sam's Olympus E-500 – the Metz SCA adapter system. I use the Metz 54 MZ-4, which offers more power and versatility than the FL-50/50R, with my Olympus E-3, E-P2, Contax 645, Contax RTS, AX, G2 as well as my Mamiya RZ67. It is great to have one flash unit that, by simply changing the adapter on its base, allows you to use it on a variety of cameras, both ancient and modern. Although ideally suited to digital use, I can even use it on my old Pentax S1a. For film and digital users, such a system offers economies of scale that no other can. That's why I prefer the SCA system to Metz's four-thirds-dedicated flashes that would also serve Sam well.

Second-hand retailers are a great source of these flashguns, as well as auction sites, and low-use ones can be found for bargain prices. Furthermore, the accessory range allows off-camera use, colour and extra diffusion filters, as well as additional power options, all of which can help in producing more creative images. For readers who are old enough to remember, it's rather like the superb Contax RTF 540 flash system of the 1970s that was never bettered for sheer comprehensiveness of accessories.

Sadly, as someone contemplating switching from Olympus to the new Fujifilm cameras, it would seem that Metz is unable to produce an adapter for the Fuji X range (is Sunpak just refusing to permit it?), which is a real shame, but I've read that several people are using the Leica 3502 SCA adapter with the flash in auto mode on their new Fuji bodies to excellent effect.

Graham G Buxton-Smither, via email

It is great to have one gun that works with so many different models – like my old Metz 45s – but big guns and little cameras can become difficult to balance and handle – Damien Demolder, Editor

APERTURE APPEAL

I have been taking photographs, and reading AP, since the 1950s, starting with a 620-format Box Brownie, progressing via an Agfa Super Silette to Olympus OM SLRS in the 1980s (all of which I still have). Coming back to photography in the digital age, I have, like others, struggled to make the transition, particularly on image editing. Articles in AP (and occasionally elsewhere) are always useful, but why the constant emphasis on Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom? As an Apple-orientated household, we naturally gravitated to Aperture, which is versatile, but different. Like Photoshop, you can always read the manual. And, like Photoshop, I'm sure I could get more out of Aperture from practical articles showing detailed aspects of how to use it. Yet everywhere I look Photoshop/Lightroom seems to have a monopoly. I sometimes feel I am wasting part of a magazine cover price on content I will never use.

So how about it, AP? I'm sure an occasional section, or maybe a short series, for Aperture users, would be welcomed by your readers. And economic theory tells us that busting monopolies is a good thing.

Peter Moffatt, Guernsey

I do sympathise, Peter, and would prefer us to produce software tutorials that were general enough to encompass all software. That, though, just doesn't work so much of the time. The concentration on Lightroom and Photoshop is a reflection of the overwhelming popularity of these products, and I am aware that the concentration only breeds more popularity. Perhaps a short series on other programs is in order. Thank you for the suggestion – Damien Demolder, Editor



START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

Earlier this year, I retired after almost 50 years of public service with the intention of giving my neglected hobby the time and effort I have been looking forward to for a long time. And what a start I enjoyed at the first print competition of the season at my photography club, Nottingham and Notts Photographic Society! I submitted my entries in the Intermediate section and, after having viewed and commented on all the entries, the visiting judge announced finally that she had narrowed the winner down to

two but couldn't decide between them. I shall never forget the thrill I felt when I sat there in the hall and heard her announce, 'Why should I have to decide? They are both winners and I award them both 20 points.'

They were both my entries (above)!

What a wonderful start to my retirement and boost to my confidence, driven weekly by my digital download of *Amateur Photographer* **Brian Young, Rutland**

Well done, Brian. If that is what retirement does... – Damien Demolder, Editor

BACK CHAT

AP reader Jim Snape explains why commercial photographers still have a big part to play in the world of business

COMMERCIAL photography, and photography itself, has changed a lot over the past ten years. When I started taking photographs, it was quite technical. You needed to know water temperatures and chemical formulas, and pretty much everything was done under a red light or, if you were lucky enough to be developing film, complete darkness.

For firms and individuals, that meant lots of shots that didn't work out. I'm pretty sure that most people have an image of themselves when they were younger where the negative was pre-exposed accidentally, leaving a band across the print. At the firm I used to work for, it cost around £20,000 a year for all the developing, scanning and using of images. However, with the advent of digital photography, suddenly you could shoot as much as the card would allow and check your shots instantly – no more shooting a Polaroid first to check lighting. Gone also were the days of six or eight exposures on a role of 6x6 slide film.

In many ways this has had a positive impact on the industry. Prints can be produced quicker and at a lower cost. Images from around the world are used within hours, if not minutes of being taken. But what does this mean for commercial photography? It's had an impact on this, too.

If someone were setting up a business in the 1990s, the chances are that to promote it they'd employ a photographer, spend money designing a leaflet or flyer, and if they were really pushing the boat out set up a website with lo-res images that 56K modems could cope with downloading.

Now, probably the first thing they do is photograph their product on a mobile phone or camera and upload it to social media channels. Even newspapers such as *The Guardian* have set up websites whereby members of the public can send in images of events to be used in the paper.

Does this mean that commercial photography is dead? Has it been devalued over a period of time? I don't think so. Too often I've seen a hastily photographed picture, which to the person taking it shows their business in a 'that will do' manner. But the fact is, first impressions count. People often make up their minds within the first 30 seconds of seeing something as to whether or not they like it. No matter what it is, or what its value to a business, the product should always be shown in the best light.

And that's where skilled photography, and photographers, still have a place. Photographers are often drawn towards landscapes, but sometimes working in a more commercially orientated area of photography can help to develop a person, and boost their portfolio with something new.

PHOTO INSIGHT

Fine-art photographer Tom D Jones discusses the process behind his graphic image of a butterfly, a shot taken from his series 'Papillon'



TOM D JONES

Tom D Jones has won many international accolades, including the Hasselblad Masters Award 2012. This biennial award is given in recognition of a photographer's contribution to the art of photography and is judged on creativity, art and craftsmanship. Tom D Jones is the first Belgian Hasselblad Master and joins such illustrious names as Anton Corbijn, Albert Watson and Howard Shatz. His work is characterised by clean compositions, light and depth, reflecting mainly infinite serenity and simplicity.

THIS image was taken very close to where I live in Knokke, in north-east Belgium. There used to be a butterfly garden near my home and it was a place that I had planned to shoot for a long time. One day, news reached me that the garden was about to close. I think the reason the closure was planned was because they wanted to build some houses on the site. That information made me jump to attention and realise that I was now facing a pretty strict deadline if I wanted to get some good butterfly images. It also forced me to go into the butterfly garden with a clear idea of what I wanted to do with this project. I didn't have time to mess around and experiment.

This project was inspired, in part, by fellow photographer Tim Flach. He has created some extraordinary projects in the past – horses, monkeys and dogs among them – but the images that particularly caught my attention were his shots of bats. His style of photography is impressive. I was particularly taken with his method of shooting his subjects outside their natural environment because he shoots them in a studio setting.

It took around eight months to make my series, which is called 'Papillon'. I didn't shoot every day, but I visited the garden pretty frequently. I made a little studio environment in the garden that I could easily put together and deconstruct. You can see a picture here of my simple set-up. I explained my plans to the experts at the butterfly garden and I was allowed to do things you wouldn't normally be able to do, such as cut the flowers. Once a butterfly landed on a flower, I could cut the flower and then rearrange it so that the image worked better on a compositional

level. Obviously I had to move slowly so the butterfly didn't get spooked and fly away.

The butterfly you see here was already in position when I shot it. I didn't have to arrange it or wait for it to move. The black background was a simple board that was placed in the shot to make the butterfly's colours stand out in the scene.

Most of the images for the series were made using natural light, as the butterfly garden is like one big softbox. The light is

very diffused, which is why there is a nice gentle light in the images. I sometimes used a mirror – you can see it in the behind-the-scenes shot – to bounce light back into the scene. On other occasions I used a little light placed just in front of me, depending on what I needed for each individual butterfly. There are also images in the series that required flash. That was necessary when I was shooting later in the year and the natural light would start to fade quite early in the day.

I shot the images for 'Papillon' on a Hasselblad H3DII with a 120mm macro lens. The shots are super-sharp and really reveal the extraordinary detail of these beautiful creatures. You don't appreciate how stunning these insects are until you get right up close to them. I always shoot using Hasselblad cameras because I tend to print my images quite large. The prints can be as big as 1 metre x 1 metre, and each image is limited to five prints. To make such large images I need a high-resolution camera, and the Hasselblad really is incredible.

People who go to my website will notice that I am referred to as a Hasselblad Master. Every two years, Hasselblad runs a competition that is divided into individual genres (landscape, architecture, and so on). Hasselblad then selects 10 or 11 masters for each category. A title like Hasselblad Master opens a lot of doors. There are many photographers in the world and you need to stand out, particularly if you want to sell your work.

It was important for me to show these butterflies in a very graphic way because that's my way of working. I like strong, clean and tight compositions. Whether I am shooting butterflies or landscapes, the feelings I want to evoke are the same. I like the serenity that a beautiful image can impart, so that's what I try to create. This is the common theme uniting all my projects.

I call myself a fine-art photographer because I'm not restricted to shooting one genre. I work with landscapes and, as you can see here, a bit of wildlife. In the future, you'll also see that I'm branching out into other subjects. My wife and I run a portrait studio, although she's the photographer for that part of things. I manage the digital workflow and printing behind the scenes. I used to do that a lot, but I got a little bored of it. It made me feel a little like an IT person. That's why I started to shoot more work such as this. I'm glad I did because 'Papillon' is a series that I'm incredibly proud of. **AP**



Tom's studio environment set up in the butterfly house for his Papillon series



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Tom D Jones was talking to Oliver Atwell

To see more of Tom's work, visit www.tomdjones.com





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– Peter Mann

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STACK MODE PROCESSING

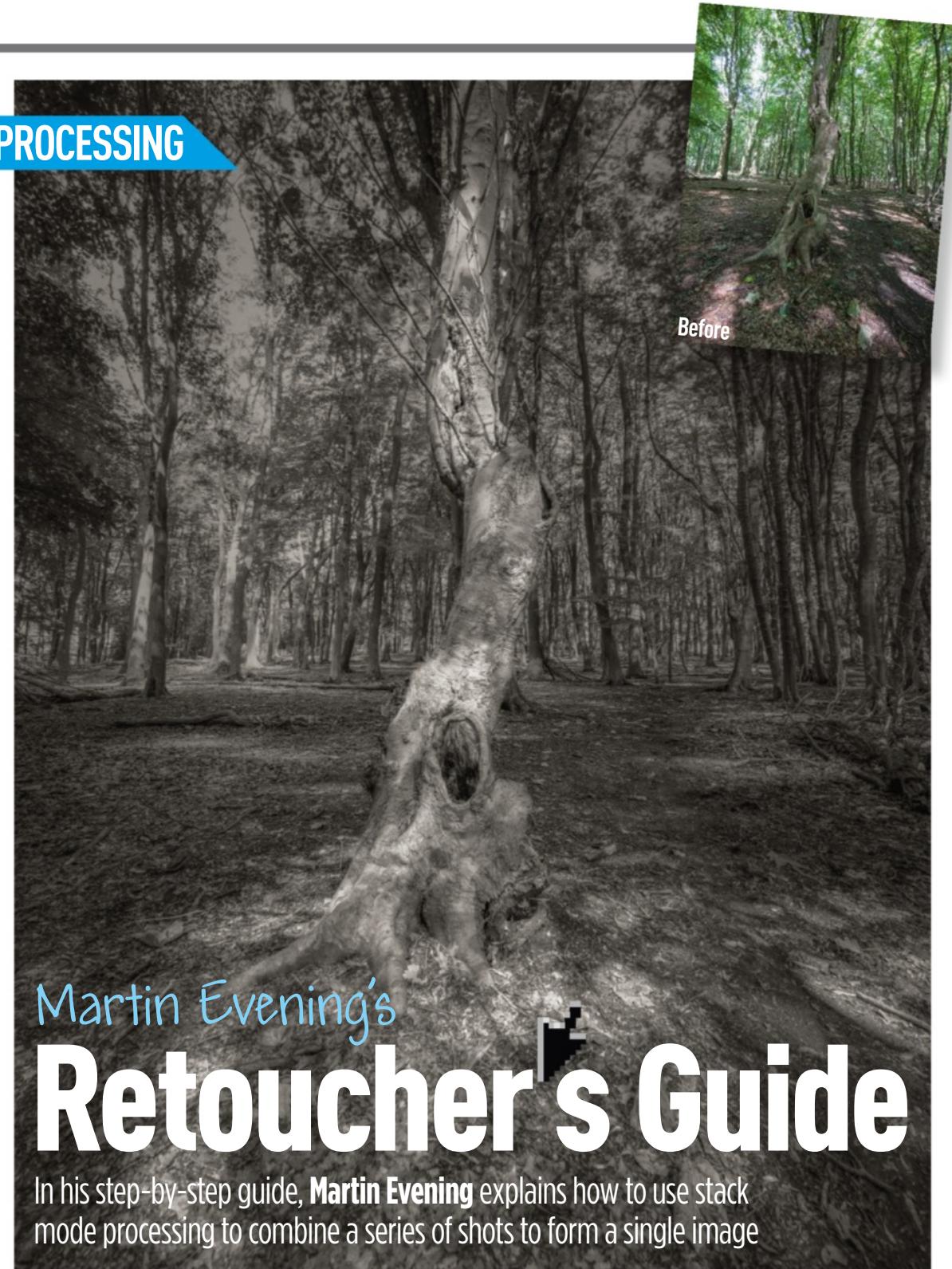


MARTIN EVENING

Martin Evening is a London-based advertising photographer and noted expert in both photography and digital imaging. As a successful photographer, Martin is well known in London for his fashion and beauty work, for which he has won several awards. In 2008, he was inducted into the NAPP Photoshop Hall of Fame.

Martin has worked with the Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom engineering teams over many years and is one of the founding members of Pixel Genius, a software design company producing automated production and creative plug-ins for Photoshop.

His recent books include *The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 4 Book*, *Adobe Photoshop CS6 for Photographers*, as well as the *Adobe Photoshop for Photographers: The Ultimate Workshop* series, which he co-wrote with Jeff Schewe.



Martin Evening's Retoucher's Guide

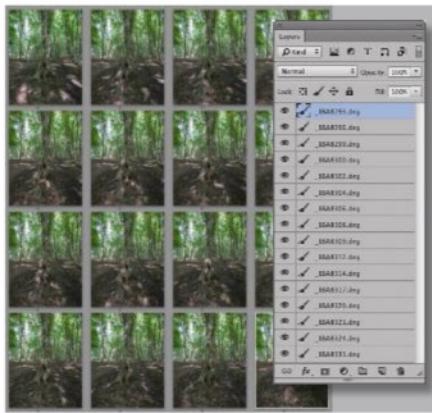
In his step-by-step guide, **Martin Evening** explains how to use stack mode processing to combine a series of shots to form a single image

I REGULARLY pass the tree in this picture while on walks through a local forest, and recently I decided to spend some time photographing it. I set the camera up on a tripod and hung around for half an hour or so, repeatedly taking photographs whenever the dappled light hitting the tree looked interesting. I did so with the intention of somehow combining all the shots together into a single image.

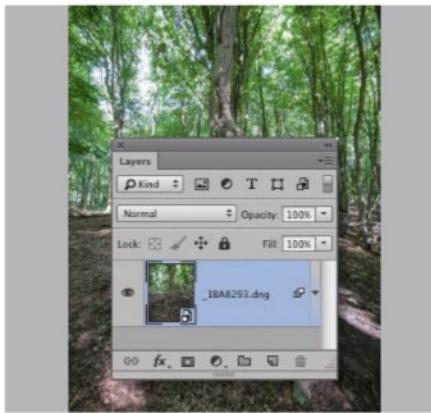
The method here relies on the use

of Smart Objects and 'stack mode' processing. I should point out that Smart Objects has, until recently, been limited to the extended versions of Photoshop only. However, this feature is now available in the latest Photoshop CC. If you don't have access to Smart Objects in Photoshop, you can still get the same result by grouping the layers and manually setting each layer to the Lighten blend mode. It takes a little longer doing it this way,

but the result is the same as using the Maximum stack blend mode. Both methods combine all the lighter exposed areas, and in the following steps I contrast this with the use of the Mean stack blend mode, or you could blend the layers using the Darken blend mode. This isn't the same as using the Mean mode, but is a good alternative. Needless to say, you need to have a reliable, sturdy tripod, plus a little patience.



1 I selected the source photos in Lightroom and went to the Photo menu, where I chose Edit in>Open as Layers in Photoshop... There were 16 images in all, and each was opened in turn and added as a new layer to a new document in Photoshop.



2 To prepare the image for the next stage, I needed to select all the layers. The shortcut for this is Command + Alt + A (Mac) or Control + Alt + A (PC). I then chose Layer>Smart Objects>Convert to Smart Object.



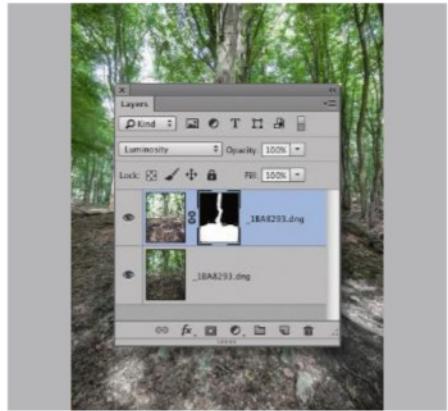
3 I duplicated the open image, choosing Image>Duplicate. With the original document selected, I went to the Layer menu again and chose Smart Objects>Stack Mode>Maximum. This processed the layers within the Smart Object to produce the result shown here.



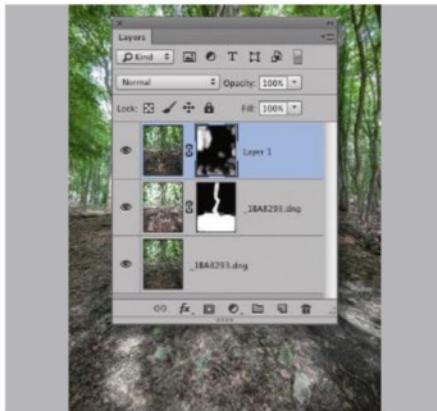
4 I then selected the copy image and this time chose Smart Objects>Stack Mode>Mean. This processed the layers within the Smart Object to produce the flat-contrast image seen here.



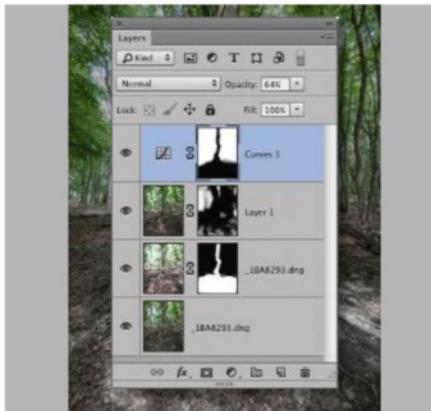
5 I went to the Layer menu and chose Smart Objects>Rasterize. I did the same for the original-version document and used the Move tool with the Shift key held down to drag the copy version across to the original so the two versions were in register. I also added a layer mask to the upper layer filled with black.



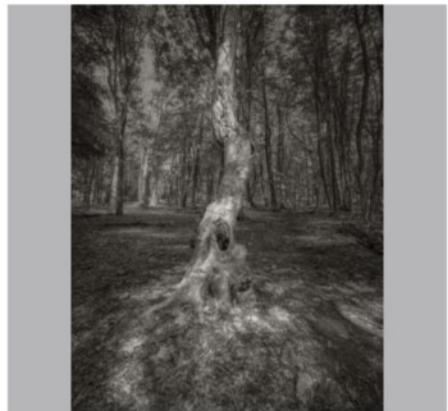
6 Next, I changed the layer blend mode to Luminosity, selected the Brush tool, and with white as the foreground colour began to paint on the layer mask to selectively reveal the dappled light effect on the tree trunk and foreground.



7 One consequence of this technique was that the tree leaves in the background looked a blurred. What I did here was to open a single image from the sequence and add it as a new layer. I added a layer mask filled with black and painted with white to reveal the sharper portions on the layer.



8 To darken the background I added a Curves adjustment layer in which I dulled down the highlights. I then painted on the adjustment layer mask to hide the tree trunk and foreground areas.



9 I saved the layered image so that it was automatically added to the Lightroom catalogue. Back in Lightroom, I converted the photo to black & white, added a sepia split-tone effect and a darkening vignette.

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Portraits with character

Betina La Plante talks about her style, her subjects and her passion for black & white to **Debbi Allen**

LOOKING at Betina La Plante's portraits, it's undeniable how accomplished they are. You may be surprised to learn, then, that Betina has been taking images seriously only for the past four years. 'I've always had an interest in photography, having been given my first camera for Christmas at the age of 14,' she says. 'However, at the time, it was simply a way of taking snap shots.'

Betina, who was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and studied art in London and Rome before working in film and television production, found her way into photography after meeting Magnum photographer Elliott Erwitt in New York. Following this, Betina started to regard photography in a different way. 'Seeing how Elliott worked, his approach to the medium in general, gave me a new appreciation for the art,' she says. 'He was

never without a camera in his hand, he saw the potential of an image everywhere and he was prepared for it – with charm and good humour. I started to pay more attention to detail in my surroundings, especially in people. I then joined sites like Flickr, met a lot of photographers, and the more I looked at their work, the more inspired I was to take photos – and portraits in particular.'

STYLE AND SUBJECT

Having only recently got into photography seriously, Betina admits that she is still very much 'learning the ropes technically'. What she means by this is that although she knows her kit inside out, she keeps it very minimal. Her tripod is admittedly dusty, her reflector gets taken to shoots but is rarely used, and lighting is not included in her kit bag.

'I don't tend to shoot in a studio, so I shoot natural light 99.9% of the time,' she says. 'However, I would like to learn to shoot with lights, so I can manipulate and control the mood. Lighting is a real art in itself, and I have great admiration, tinged with envy, for those who do it well.'

Looking at her images, it's hard to believe that Betina has such a simple set-up, so how does she go about creating these wonderfully balanced and tonally rich images? 'A lot of the portraits I have created have been taken in the subject's home, so it's about using what's there,' she explains. 'I have never modified the light using diffusers – to be honest I hadn't even thought about that before – but I have started trying to use reflectors. Generally, I use just what is available from windows and doors. I move

Betina's son Jack, dune jumping in Uruguay.

'Sometimes you don't know what you've caught,' she says. 'I was lucky with this one, as all the elements worked together'

Right: Author Peter Mayle photographed on the balcony of a house in London

Far right: Abstract Impressionist painter Gino Hollander in front of a painting he did of Betina while she was helping catalogue his work

Below right: 'Brett Walker, my mentor, in one of the few portraits I've taken with flash,' says Betina. 'He has been instrumental in encouraging me to overcome my fears of the unknown and dive into experimenting'



the subject nearer or further from the window, depending on the size and which direction it is facing, but other than that it's about my subject, not lights, settings or anything else.'

This focus on her subject allows Betina to try to capture character rather than a posed studio shot. And it is this look that means she has subjects asking to sit for her, rather than her knocking down doors.

'One of the most important things to me is that the subject is comfortable,' she says. 'Many people don't like having their photo taken because they are shy or nervous, and if they do like being in front of a camera they can put on a performance. I know I prefer to be behind a lens rather than in front of one. I try not to have any preconceptions so I don't style anyone, as I don't want to impose an idea of who I think they should be. If the end result is about getting the "real" person, not who you or they think they should be, then the camera must become a non-threatening part of you, rather than an object between you and the subject. Developing a trust helps everyone relax, allowing those fleeting moments of reality when someone is truly being themselves.'

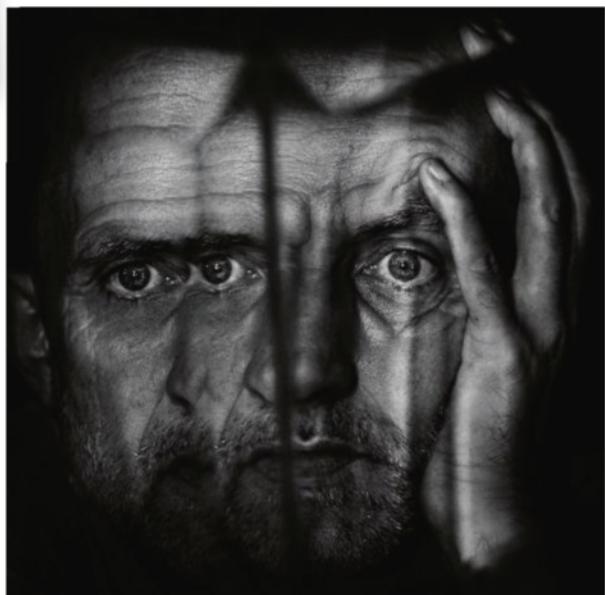


Betina is keen to stress that she gets to know her subjects before she picks up her camera. 'I think it's human nature to put on an act in front of a lens, be it conscious or subconscious,' she says. 'Some people are naturally shy and can tense up, while others try to be who they think they should be in front of the lens and therefore put on an act. If there is a connection developed, then those barriers come down, and it's that mutual trust that I think allows me to shoot a more "honest" portrait. I find most often that it's the spontaneous moments, the unscripted ones, that turn into the best and, unusually, the most emotional portraits.'

As well as working with the actor Terence

Stamp, who is a family friend, Betina has worked with the likes of actor Nickolas Grace, writer and journalist Herbert Kretzmer, director Alan Parker, author Peter Mayle and model/actress Carolyn Murphy.

Betina also cites the same reasons for not using a make-up artist or stylist for her shoots. 'The only time I have taken a portrait where a stylist was involved was when I visited a photographer friend and she had hired models and a make-up artist for her own shoot,' she explains. 'We decided that, for fun, we would make her up. Everything else has been on my own, though. I don't ask people to dress up or to put on make-up. I photograph them as they come and as they are.'



Above right: Betina asked her son Jack to 'blow her a kiss' of these paper hearts five times for this staged shot



HOW I CAME TO PHOTOGRAPH TERENCE STAMP

'THE BULK of my portraits are of people around me, my friends, family or those I have met through other people,' says Betina. '[Actor] Terence Stamp is a family friend, and he's the godfather to my eldest son, but it never occurred to me to take his photo until someone suggested it. I went to Europe and he put me in touch with some of his friends.'

Right: Betina's son Tomas on the blocks waiting for his race to start. 'They keep track of their events by writing them on their hands,' she says

TOP TIPS

- 1 Start by creating a well-exposed photo, even if you know you're going to edit it. This is the best starting point
- 2 Always check your camera settings in case you have forgotten to change them from a previous shoot
- 3 Shoot something that inspires you, be it portraits, landscapes or anything else
- 4 We all learn by doing things, so make sure you practise, practise, practise



COLOUR VERSUS MONO

Betina's passion for the raw and honest also influences her post-processing decisions, most obviously her choice to work almost exclusively in black & white.

'I think black & white is a more powerful medium than colour photography,' she says. 'It takes away all the distractions and just leaves the essence. The first thing I do when I download my photos to the computer is desaturate them. It takes away everything else and just leaves the subject.'

Betina has dipped a toe into the colour photography world, though, as her photo of her son Jack (above) shows. 'I find colour really difficult,' she says. 'I think it's a real art to process colour. I don't think I've honed the art to my liking yet.'

This shot was taken for a purpose, though. As Betina mentioned earlier, she finds Flickr a source of inspiration, and one of the groups she follows offered to send out the little hearts featured in the photo to people, to interpret them in their own way.

'I asked my son to "blow me a kiss" that would send the paper hearts flying,' she explains. 'Even though it is very staged, in this instance the cliché seemed to work. After asking Jack five times to help pick up the hearts and do it again, he'd had enough. The fun and spontaneity were gone and the session was over!'

As well as finding inspiration on Flickr,



ALL PICTURES © BETINA LA PLANTE



Betina also admits to spending lots of time on Facebook. 'I look at pages managed by people who post the most incredible images from the late 1800s to the present day,' she says.

Betina is also inspired by many other photographers, such as Irving Penn, Elliott Erwitt, Erwin Blumenfeld, Sally Mann and Brett Walker, a contemporary London-based photographer and close friend. 'He's exceptional,' says Betina. 'His work is original, authentic, unique and emotionally powerful. His images don't just stop a moment in time, but they challenge you to think. That's the thing about great photography – it has the power to open minds, and the best part is its language is universal.'

KEEP ON LEARNING

Shooting most of her portraits on her trusty Nikon D800, Betina has also started to experiment with film photography. 'I have a Hasselblad, which I find heavy and can sometimes struggle with focus, but I have started to use it more,' she says. 'I even recently bought a Polaroid back so I could get instant results, although the cost is a little prohibitive for me at the moment.'

Teaming up her Nikon with a series of prime lenses, including a 35mm, 50mm, 85mm and 105mm, Betina explains why digital is best for her style. 'It's about finding a process that works



for you,' she says. 'For portraits, I stick to the prime lenses as I think they are that much better in terms of quality. I grew up using film and I still have a film camera, but the convenience of digital is that you can shoot, upload, edit and print your photo within half an hour. This suits my photographic style. Although there is real value to using a tripod in certain circumstances, there is something more spontaneous about being able to move around your subject without its constraints.'

After keeping her set-up as simple as possible while shooting, Betina carries this through to the editing process. 'I try to do as little as possible,' she says. 'I shoot colour, so I have to convert to black & white. It also depends on the mood I want to get from a portrait. If circumstances haven't allowed me a great background, I will edit it out. When I first started using Photoshop I was excited by the possibilities, and I think a lot of the time I went overboard with the editing. I now go back and re-edit those photos and I think I get much better results.'



With a raft of high-profile names already under her belt, it would be easy for Betina to wish for more celebrity clientele, but she is remarkably grounded. 'I saw a photo of [the actress] Tilda Swinton recently and thought I would love to photograph her because she has a remarkable face,' says Betina. 'But I just hope to be able to make interesting portraits of anyone I photograph. Age,

gender and looks are all irrelevant to me. At first I said yes to anyone who wanted to sit in front of my lens, but now I have started to ask people.'

FINAL THOUGHT

Describing herself as a 'full-time mother and occasional photographer,' Betina has found a way to express herself through her portraits. She might intend to capture their character in the 'unscripted moments', but she also puts her own stamp on each of the photos – and her style is raw, honest and balanced.

For Betina, feedback and constructive criticism from fellow photographers, as well as the passion for what she does, are what keep her shooting – and the thought that she has yet to take her best photo. 'My favourite image is the one I haven't taken yet,' she says. 'If I already had a favourite or best photo, what is there to inspire me to go out and take the next one? I'm always learning. They say you're only as good as your last photo, but I think you're as good as the next one.' **AP**

Above: Erika Huffman, photographer and close friend of Betina during the 'styled' shoot. 'This was the first frame, while I was testing the light, and she was waiting for me to get my act together,' says Betina

Left: The hands of a man walking ahead of Betina on the Portobello Road in London. 'I love hands, as they have a language of their own and as much character as faces,' she says

To see more of Betina's work, visit her Flickr stream at www.flickr.com/photos/betinalaplante

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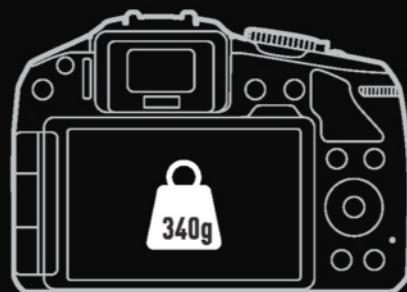
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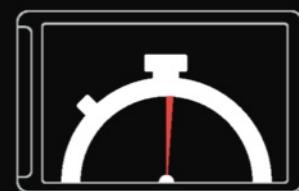


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Homeward bound



This month, **Michael Kenna** returns to his native Lancashire for an exhibition celebrating his 60th birthday. Life's been a fabulous journey so far, he tells **David Clark**

MICHAEL Kenna loves what he does. 'I have a passion for it and am absolutely amazed that I have been on this fabulous journey for so long,' he says. It's a journey that has taken Michael from his working-class roots in the industrial town of Widnes in Lancashire to his status as one of today's most highly regarded fine-art landscape photographers.

Next month, Michael's journey reaches a significant milestone: he will be 60 in

November. This birthday is being marked by an exhibition of his work in Runcorn in Cheshire, a few miles south of his birthplace. The 50 prints on show range from early work exploring his local area to the minimalist work made during the past few years in locations far from home, including China and Japan.

The exhibition demonstrates that although his style has developed over the past 40 years, his vision has remained constant. The earliest image in the show, taken when he

was 20 years old, shows the bridge linking Runcorn to Widnes silhouetted against a dramatic sky (see pages 30–31). From the outset, simplicity, atmosphere and the shapes of buildings in the landscape appealed to him.

'My consistent interest over the years has been in the relationship, juxtaposition, even the confrontation between the landscape and structures that we place in it,' says Michael. 'Empty sports stadiums, old mills, abandoned structures, seafront buildings, trees, playgrounds, places of religious worship, the intimate landscapes of gardens – these all continue to attract me. 'So, I suppose my signature style was there from the beginning. I would like to think it has evolved as other influences have come into play, but I don't think it has changed drastically over the years.'

'Bill Brandt's Chimney, Halifax, Yorkshire, 1983'.
Kenna's shot pays homage to one of his heroes, Bill Brandt, who photographed the chimney in 1937



IN THE FIELD

Today, Michael works in the same way as he has throughout the majority of his career. 'I don't do any elaborate preparation before I go to a location,' he says. 'Essentially, I walk, explore and photograph. I never know whether I will be there for minutes, hours or days.'

'For me, approaching subject matter to photograph is a bit like meeting a person and beginning a conversation. Certainly, a sense of curiosity and a willingness to be patient to allow the subject matter to reveal itself are important elements in this process.'

Michael shoots in black & white because, in his view, 'The subtlety of black & white inspires the imagination of the individual viewer to complete the picture in their mind's eye. It doesn't attempt to compete with the outside world. I believe it is calmer and more gentle than colour and persists longer in our visual memory.'

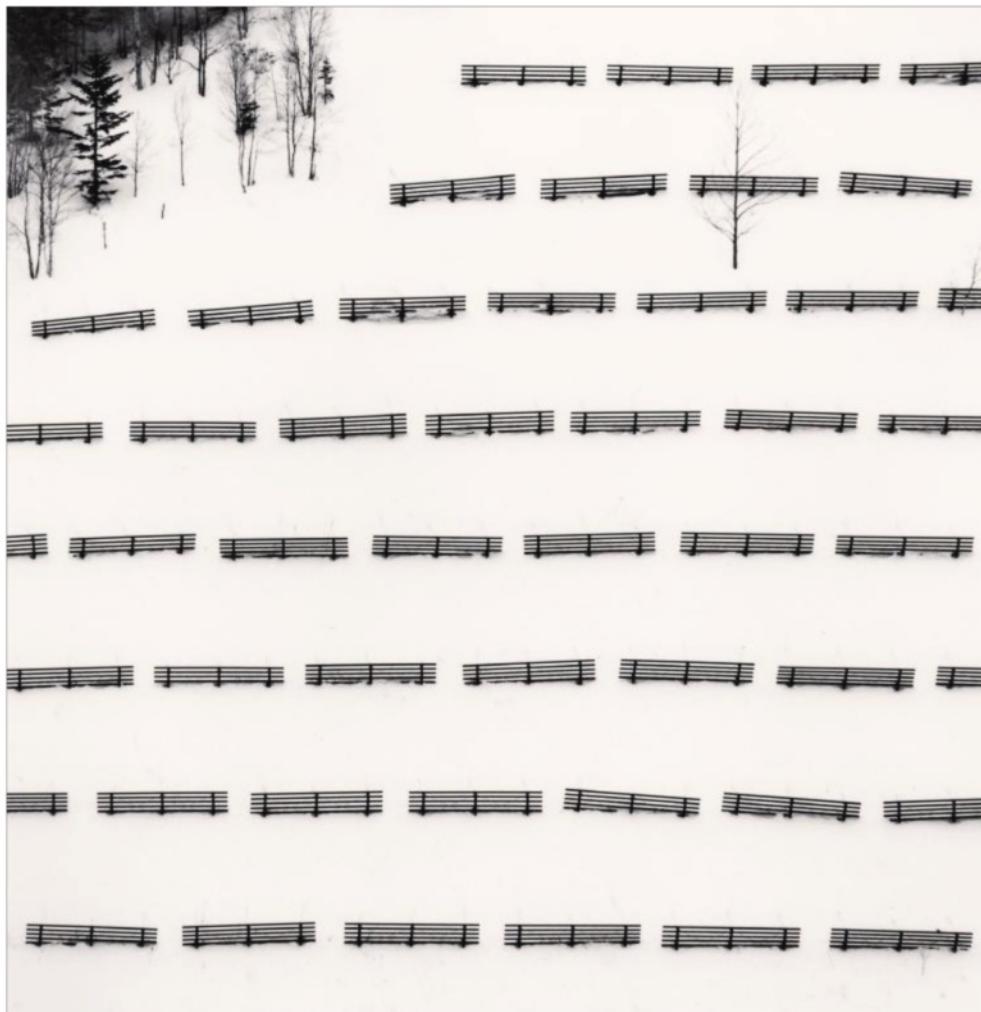
Solitude is also an important element in Michael's creativity, so he prefers to take photographs either very early in the morning or during the night. What does he look for in a landscape? 'I search for subject matter with visual patterns, interesting abstractions and graphic compositions,' he says. 'I enjoy places that have mystery and atmosphere, perhaps a patina of age, a suggestion rather than a description, a question or two.'

He often photographs subjects such as

Right: 'Yuanyang, Study 3, Yunnan, China'. Terraced rice fields, filled with water, have made a striking image, taken in 2013



Below: 'Fifty Fences, Taisetsu, Hokkaido, Japan'. This 2004 image is representative of Kenna's later, more minimalist style



pathways, plank walks, bridges and even just empty spaces, and consciously seeks them out. 'These are invitations for a viewer to enter into the frame and wander by themselves,' he explains. 'Usually, there is no obvious destination. It is up to the individual to find their own way, to use their own imagination, to create their own stories.'

Michael has no set way of photographing. During daylight, his exposures may be short and handheld, or long, aided by a neutral density filter and with the camera tripod-mounted. At night, he may shoot only one or two exposures, each several hours long.

Inevitably, there are days when things don't work out. 'That's life,' he says. 'If photographing was easy all the time there would be no challenge, and no sense of satisfaction when an image actually comes out successfully.'

'I have photographed for weeks and captured very little, and then in the space of a few minutes the magic happens and I may get two or three images I like. Practise, practise, practise. It's the advice I give all aspiring photographers, artists and professionals. Keep showing up and something will happen!'

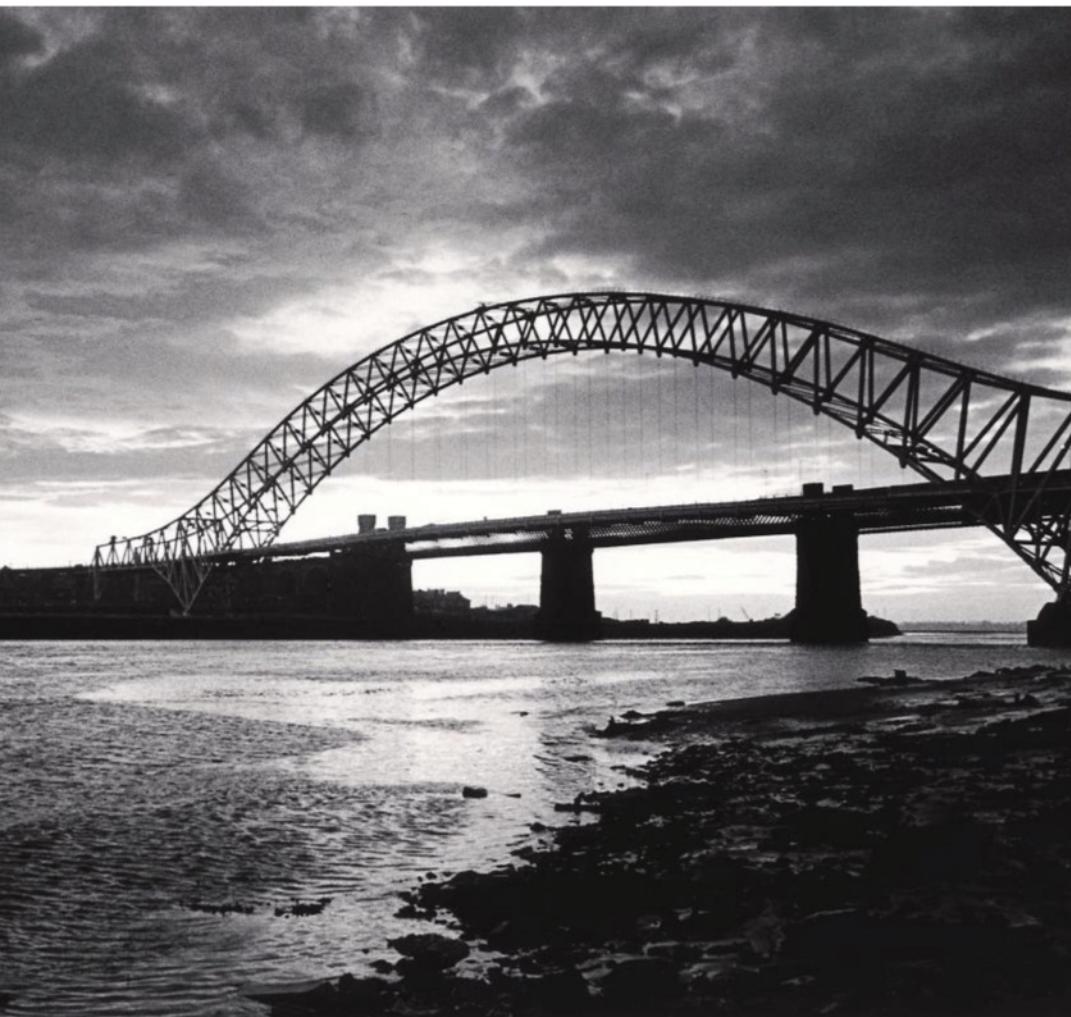
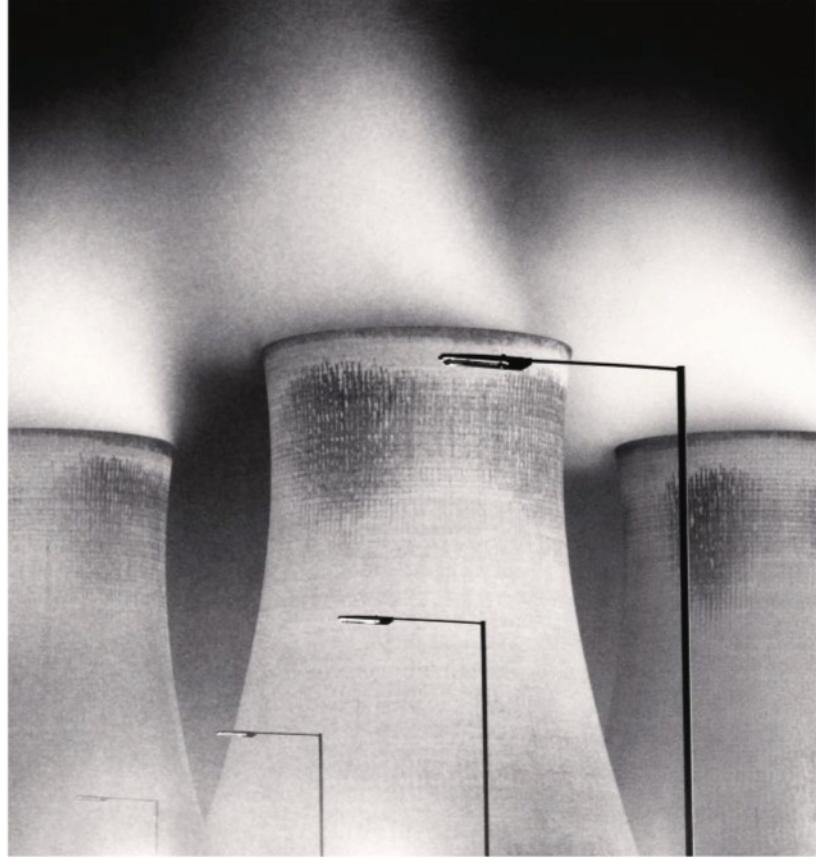
TRADITIONAL METHODS

Michael doesn't try to visualise the finished print when making the exposure, as he prefers to see

Right: 'Didcot Power Station, Study 1, Oxfordshire'. A long exposure has contributed to the surreal appearance of this image, taken in 1989



Below: 'Runcorn-Widnes Bridge, Study 2, Cheshire'. Shot in 1973, this is the earliest image in Kenna's retrospective exhibition



KENNA'S KITBAG

MICHAEL'S early work in the 1970s and '80s was shot on Voigtländer, Pentax and Nikon 35mm kit. Since the mid-1980s, he has mainly worked with Hasselblad medium-format film cameras. Now, he uses two Hasselblad 501CM bodies and five lenses covering focal lengths from 40mm to 250mm.

He also takes two viewfinders: a waist-level viewfinder and a metered pentaprism. He carries one film back for ISO 100 film and another for ISO 400 film, plus a Gossen Luna Pro light meter. He also takes a lightweight graphite tripod and cable releases.

'These cameras have become old friends, familiar and easy to be with,' he says. 'They are fully manual with no fancy bells or whistles. They can function in extreme conditions and are generally reliable. They are versatile and don't weigh too much, which is important as I walk a lot with them.'

 the developed negative and make decisions in the darkroom. He sees printing his own work as 'a critical part of the creative process' and likes to do it himself because 'printing is very personal and somebody else's interpretation could be completely different from mine'.

His prints are around 8in (20cm) square, and are made using traditional photographic paper in a wet darkroom. He prints in this way 'to encourage a close relationship between the print and a viewer. One has to be quite close to the print to appreciate it and I like the idea that a whispered conversation is going on rather than a lecture'.

Although he's familiar with what can be

achieved with digital cameras and post-processing software, he doesn't use either in his fine-art work. 'The whole photographic process has been made much easier, faster, cleaner and more accessible to more people by digital innovations,' he says. 'That's a good thing. I think artists should use whatever equipment is appropriate for their vision.'

However, digital photography is not for him. 'I don't need or desire instant gratification in photography and it is the long, slow journey to the final print that captivates me,' he continues. 'I still prefer the limitations and imperfections of the non-digital world.'

'Perhaps my preferences have hindered my suitability for some commercial

Below: 'Full Moon Rise, Chausey Islands, France, 2007'. One of a series of photographs shot at night, each several hours long

assignments, but that side of photography has never been my highest priority. I have no doubt that if I need to learn about the digital craft in the future, I can and will. While silver materials are available, I suspect that I will stay with what I know and love best.'

CREATIVE PATH

Michael was brought up in a small house in Widnes, which he shared with his parents, grandmother and five elder siblings. He and his four brothers slept in the same room. 'As a boy, I spent a lot of time wandering, often on my own, around the town,' he says. 'Looking back, it seems that the places and life I experienced as a child greatly influenced



the way that I would later photograph.'

After schooling at a Catholic seminary in Upholland, Lancashire, he attended Banbury School of Art in Oxfordshire, where he began taking photographs. He went on to study photography at the London College of Printing from 1973-76. He says he chose photography for 'survival' reasons.

'I wanted to be an artist, but knew the possibilities in England at that time were limited,' he says. 'Photography seemed a good way to make a living.' He worked in fashion, advertising and sports photography before gravitating towards landscape photography, a genre that suited him perfectly.

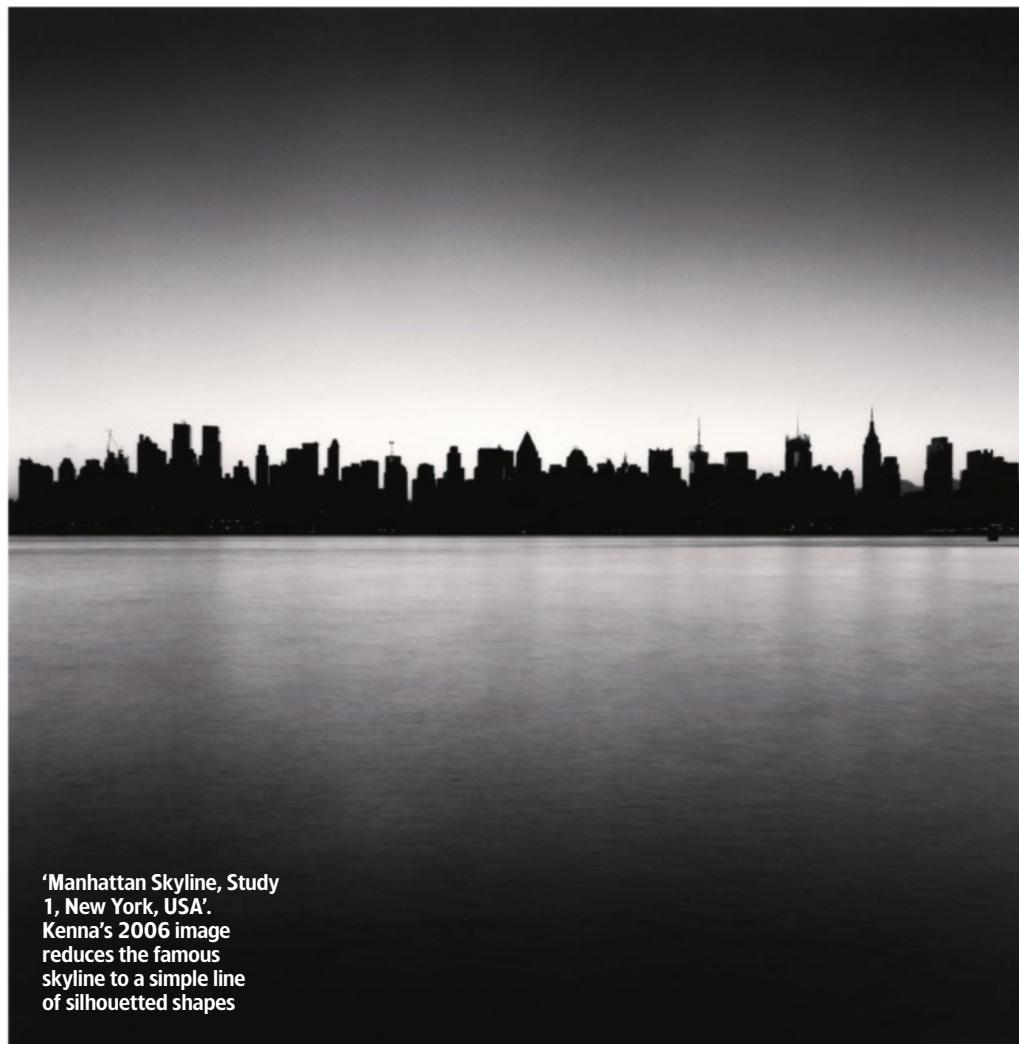
Perhaps the most significant period in his development as a photographer began in 1977 when he moved to San Francisco in the USA to work as an assistant to the fine-art photographer Ruth Bernhard. For Ruth, a negative was merely a starting point for the final print, and the darkroom skills that Michael developed, during the eight years he worked for her, became an important part of his own work.

In the 1980s, he photographed urban and rural landscapes around the USA and UK. In 1987, he made his first visit to Japan, which has become a favourite place for him to work. Since then, he has continued to travel widely, exploring new locations, and his output of new work has been prolific.

Right: 'Ten and a Half Trees, Peterof, Russia, 2000'



Michael Kenna's 60th birthday retrospective, called *A Journey Home*, is on show at The Brindley, High Street, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 1BG until 23 November. For more details visit www.thebrindley.org.uk or call 0151 907 8360. Admission free



'Manhattan Skyline, Study 1, New York, USA'.
Kenna's 2006 image reduces the famous skyline to a simple line of silhouetted shapes

Michael now lives in Seattle in the USA with his wife and daughter, although he is often away from his adopted home. 'I spend three to six months a year photographing,' he says. 'The rest of the time I spend either in the darkroom printing or with my family. My dear wife Mamta is, fortunately for me, very understanding of what it takes to follow a creative path in life.'

OASIS OF CALM

Michael's work often evokes a sense of calm and contemplation in the viewer, even spiritual equilibrium. The singer/song writer Elton John, a long-term admirer of his work, has written that he is 'captivated by the mystery of his night images and the sophisticated simplicity of his landscapes' and is attracted to it because it is 'elegant, serene, meditative'.

Michael is aware of the way his work is perceived and, as he approaches his 60th birthday, he says he simply aims to keep on doing it. 'I couldn't wish for a better life. I sincerely hope that I can contribute something in return,' he says. 'I have had the privilege and opportunities to visit places many people don't have access to and have witnessed incredible sights.'

'I want to share these special experiences, and photography has provided me with the perfect vehicle to do this. Our world these days is fast paced, noisy, colourful, full of distractions. I try to provide something of an oasis, a calm place of rest. At this point in my life I feel a great responsibility to continue for as long as I am able.' **AP**

To see more of Michael Kenna's work, visit his website at www.michaelkenna.net

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ReaderSpotlight

1



James Sleigh Leicestershire

While James was first attracted to photography because of the technology, he soon discovered that he loved everything about creative image-making. He says his favourite photographic subjects are flowers, because of their beautiful colours and

the vast variety of different species. James finds photography particularly appealing because of its near-limitless scope for invention: 'Anything can be created and result in truly stunning photographs,' he says.

2



Droplets in garden

1 The water droplets form fascinating sculptural shapes that dominate this image

Fujifilm X10, 28-112mm, 1/550sec at f/2, ISO 550

Three

2 The three disparate subjects make for a fresh, intriguing image

Fujifilm X10, 28-112mm, 1/680sec at f/2, ISO 200

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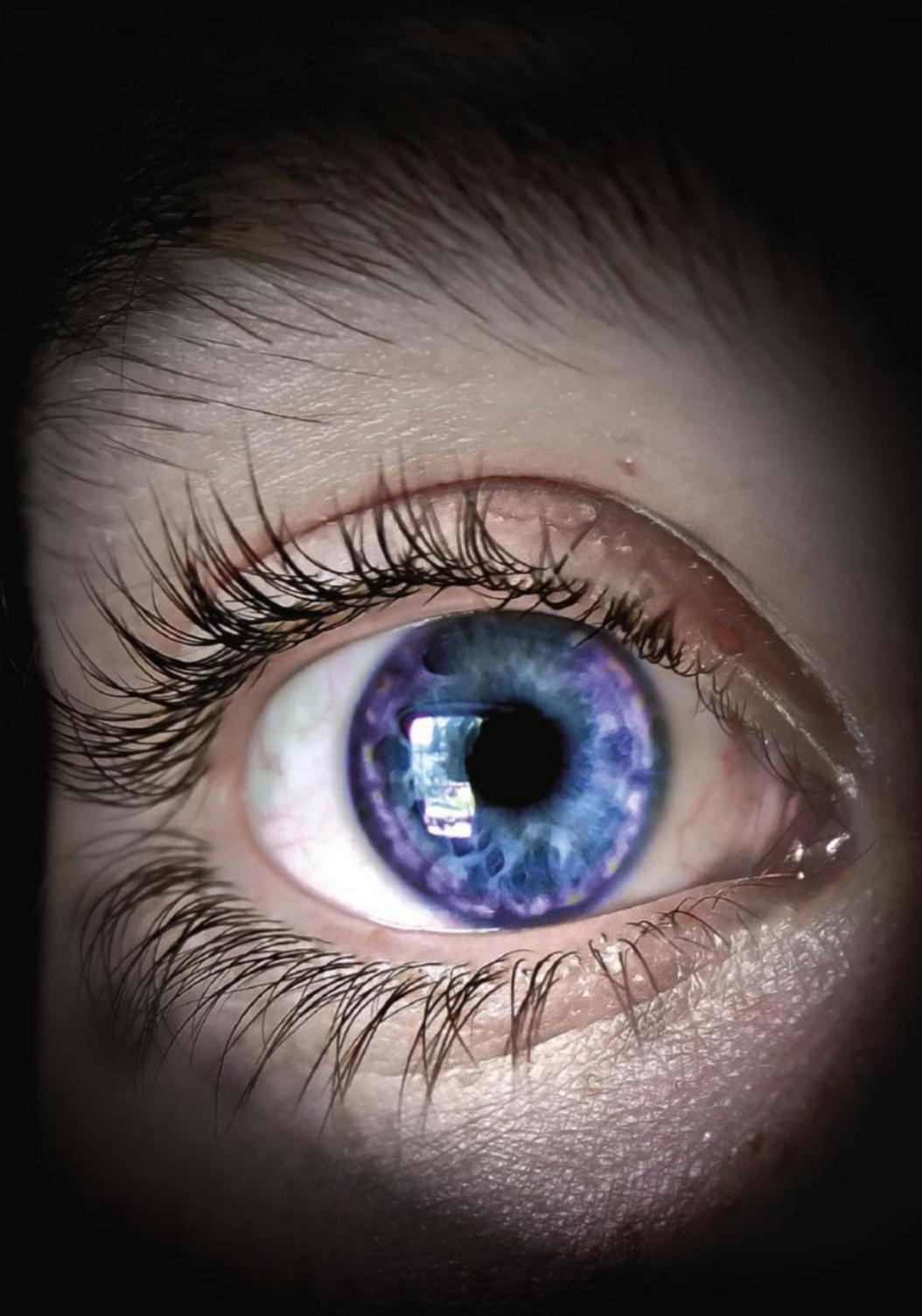
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Eye contact

3 Less is more: a simple, sparse composition makes for an unforgettable image

Fujifilm X10, 28-112mm,
1/60sec at f/2.8, ISO 500

Mike Morley

North Yorkshire

Mike's fantastic photographs on these pages were taken on a seven-day trip to Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic, with wildlife photographer Andy Rouse. The group was lucky enough to photograph ten polar bears over the week, the highlight of which Mike says was an encounter with a mother bear with two six-month-old cubs. To see more, find Mike on Flickr at www.flickr.com/photos/mikemorleyphotos.

1



2





Last look

1 Mike captured this shot while on a fast-moving boat
Canon EOS 6D, 100-400mm, 1/1000sec at f/7.1, ISO 500

Travelling twins

2 The composition of horizontal lines and shapes works well
Canon EOS 6D, 100-400mm, 1/4000sec at f/5.6, ISO 800

Lone cub

3 The stripped-down nature of this shot gives it its power
Canon EOS 6D, 100-400mm, 1/160sec at f/7.1, ISO 400

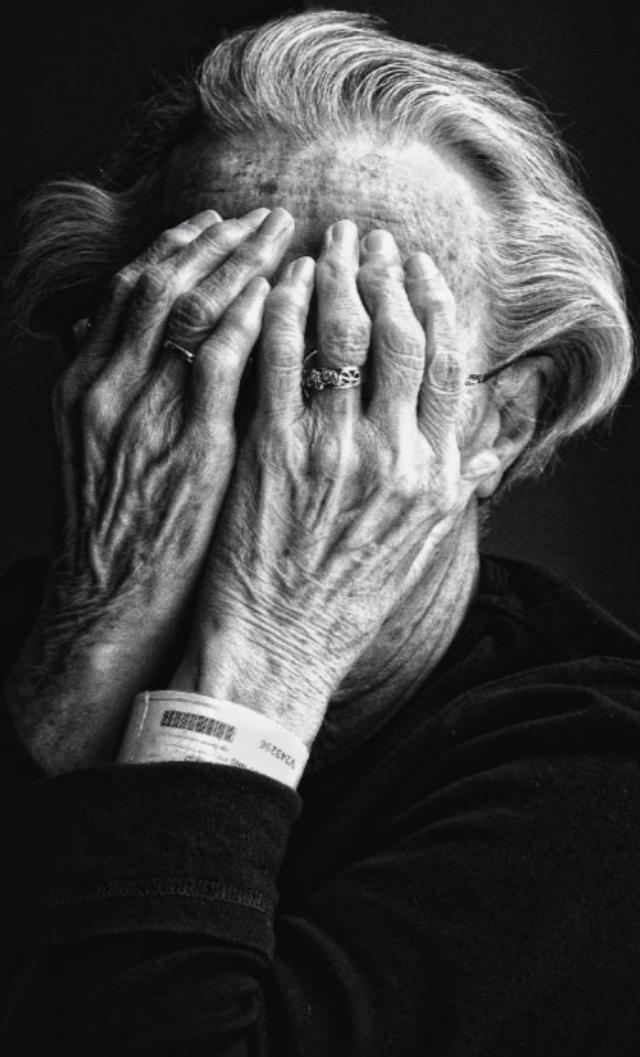
Silhouette

4 The silhouette emphasises the shape of the bear
Canon EOS 6D, 100-400mm, 1.4x converter, 1/80sec at f/9, ISO 400



This is a slightly different take on a polar bear capture, with the warmer tones and use of a silhouette allowing it to stand out from the usual all-white images – Debbie Allen, deputy editor

1



2



3



Peter Hodgson Birmingham

'I have always been interested in art,' says Peter. 'Even at a very young age I could be seen with a paint brush in my hand.' When he discovered that what he pictured in his mind didn't always relate to what ended up on paper, Peter turned to photography. 'I love taking photographs,' he says. 'I am constantly aware of any photo opportunity that presents itself. Normally I see light first and the way it falls in a certain way or how it shapes patterns. I also have a fondness for dark, graphic images.' Find Peter on Flickr at www.flickr.com/peterhodgson.

Wait

1 The emotion and frustration in this shot are palpable, with the hospital tag on the wrist providing a little context. Canon PowerShot G15, 18mm, 1/200sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

Monolith

2 Proof that it's the photographer not the camera, Peter's atmospheric images were made on compact cameras. Fujifilm X10, 8mm, 1/1000sec at f/11, ISO 250

Bare

3 Peter liked the way the sun lit up this scene. 'It's all about the light,' he says. 'There are strong shadows, deep tones – what's not to enjoy?' Canon PowerShot G10, 8mm, 1/25sec at f/5.6, ISO 80

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AP Testbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's equipment tests, reader questions and technique pointers

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THE LEXAR Professional Workflow Reader Solution is a system that allows up to four memory cards to be read and downloaded to a laptop or computer at once via USB. This is perfect for anyone who shoots lots of images and wants them downloaded quickly. The main hub (HR1) allows four separate readers to be inserted. The readers are purchased separately and allow the user a choice of SDHC/SDXC, UHS-I and UDMA 7 CompactFlash (£24.99) and XQD (£35.99) formats. Lexar states that the HR1 system is future-proof because users can swap the readers should technology change and different cards be released. It is also useful for photographers who change to a camera that supports a different card type. Thankfully, these readers are not just limited to use with the hub, as they can also be used on their own.

The system is very fast and it comes equipped with a USB 3.0 cable, although it is still speedy when used with older USB 2.0 ports. The build quality is of a high standard and everything fits together seamlessly. However, the system is expensive if you want to buy all four readers for the hub.

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COMPATIBLE

with a range of Nikon and Canon DSLRs, Hähnel's Extreme lithium-ion batteries are designed to be taken into extreme shooting situations. They are able to withstand extreme temperatures and absorb the shock from impact thanks to their silicone-injected construction that protects vital circuitry from harm. The four models in the range vary in power, from 1,100-1,700mAh, depending on which Canon or Nikon battery they are substituted for. The four Extreme batteries replace the Canon LP-E8 and LP-E6, and Nikon EN-EL14 and EN-EL15 batteries.

On test, the batteries worked faultlessly, and Hähnel states that the batteries can handle more than an impressive 500 charge/discharge cycles. You could question the value of attaching a shockproof battery to a non-shockproof DSLR. Were you to drop your Nikon D600, for instance, the battery would probably be the least of your concerns. However, if you're regularly out in demanding shooting conditions, having a battery that's somewhat insured against the elements means there's one less thing to worry about. **Jon Stapley**



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FORTHCOMING TESTS In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

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AP 26 October

Olympus OM-D E-M1

Olympus's micro four thirds system camera with new 16-million-pixel Live MOS sensor and Olympus's 'fastest-ever' AF system.

AP 2 November

Weye Feye

The XSeries Weye Feye device enables remote control of a DSLR via Wi-Fi. We put it to the test.

AP 2 November

Nikon Coolpix P7800

We find out how Nikon's latest enthusiast compact camera, with 12.2-million-pixel resolution and electronic viewfinder, performs.

AP 9 November

Canon PowerShot G16

Canon's latest advanced compact camera with wireless connectivity, 12-million-pixel CMOS sensor and 28-140mm (equivalent) zoom lens.

AP 16 November



Focal length: 90mm · Exposure: F/2.8, 1/250 sec · ISO 100

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Never judge a book...

... by its cover is a well-known phrase that applies to the camera used to take this image.

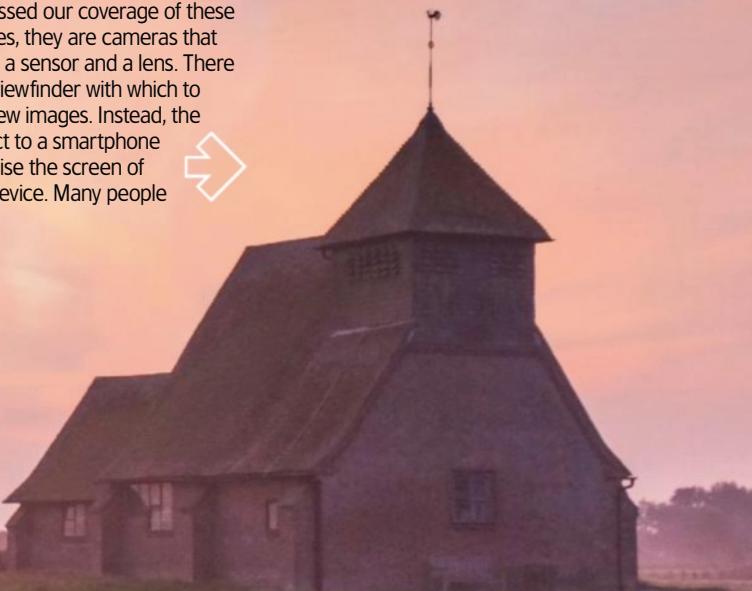
Richard Sibley explains why we should get over our fixed ideas of what a camera should look like

Taken at sunrise, this image was shot on a new, rather unconventional camera

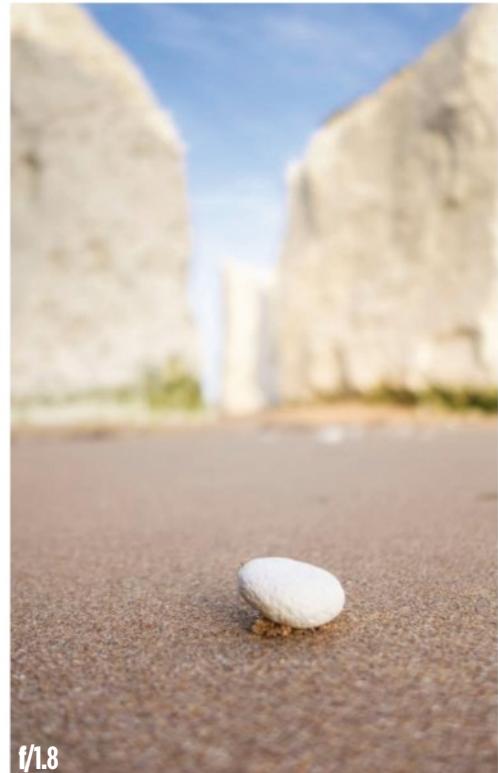
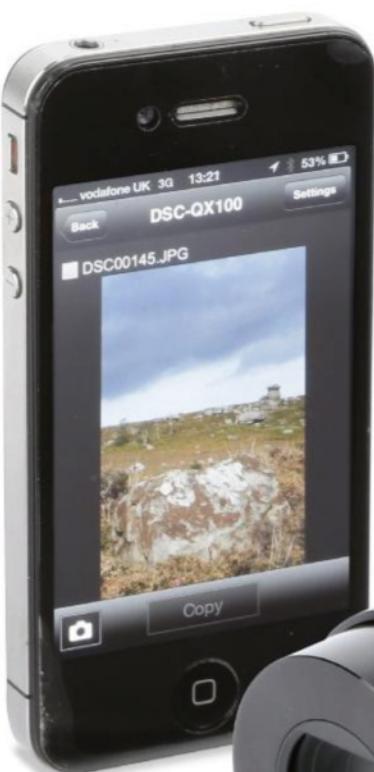
ONE OF the mantras we often hear is that the introduction of digital imaging means that cameras don't have to look like cameras any more. The mechanics, wind-on mechanisms and motors are, of course, obsolete nowadays, and even optical viewfinders and single-lens reflex systems are found less frequently. Yet despite this, the basic design of cameras has remained roughly the same. In fact, most compact system cameras are designed to look like the models of yesteryear, whether they are styled as a rangefinder or an SLR.

That said, alternative designs have appeared recently – the Lytro Light Field Camera was launched earlier this year and now we have new Sony Cyber-shot DSC-QX10 and QX100.

If you have missed our coverage of these innovative devices, they are cameras that consist simply of a sensor and a lens. There is no screen or viewfinder with which to compose and view images. Instead, the cameras connect to a smartphone or tablet and utilise the screen of the secondary device. Many people



'Both cameras have tripod sockets and take Micro SD cards, which plug into the small covered sockets on the side of the cameras'



Above: The f/1.8 maximum aperture creates a shallow depth of field, particularly when focusing closely



now have a smartphone or tablet with a sophisticated computer and a large, high-definition screen that is often more powerful and of a better quality than that found on a camera. The idea of using a large screen is also appealing, as using a tablet to compose images on a 7-10in screen is similar to using a 5x4in or larger format camera. A tablet has an even greater advantage in that the exposure, colour and contrast can all be previewed live while composing the image.

One of the complaints concerning smartphone cameras is the lack of quality and the absence of a zoom lens. The Sony QX cameras are designed to solve both these issues, providing a larger sensor and an optical zoom. With the market for

The QX cameras connect wirelessly to a smartphone or tablet

smartphones and tablets around six times bigger than the digital camera market, and sales of consumer compact cameras declining, Sony's reasoning behind the new QX range is clear. The concept is certainly innovative, but what are the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-QX10 and QX100 like to use?

FEATURES

It would be quite easy to dismiss the QX cameras as novelties, but the technology they employ is borrowed straight from existing Sony cameras. The QX10 has a 10x optical zoom and a 1/2.3in, 18.9-million-pixel, compact camera sensor. The QX100 has an even better specification, boasting a 1in, 20.9-million-pixel CMOS sensor paired with an f/1.8 3.6x Carl Zeiss lens. Effectively,

the QX10 and QX100 are the Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-WX150 and RX100 II cameras respectively, minus the LCD screens and packed in a different body.

Both cameras have tripod sockets and take Micro SD cards, which plug into small covered sockets on the side of the cameras. At the back is a compartment for a battery, which is charged via an increasingly common micro USB socket. A tiny LCD screen, smaller than a little fingernail, shows the battery life and whether a Micro SD card is installed. Sadly, the display does not show the number of remaining images that can be recorded to the memory card.

There are few physical controls on the QX cameras, with just a zoom toggle, shutter button and power

CAMERAS IN USE

THE CAMERAS connect to a smartphone via a sprung folding grip that sits at the back of the camera. The arms of the grip stretch apart, allowing it to be used with smartphones with a width of 54–75mm and a maximum thickness of 13mm. I found that even with a fairly substantial case around an iPhone 5, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-QX10 and QX100 could be attached easily. The grip itself can be easily removed from the camera by pressing a catch and giving the lens a twist, in much the same way as a lens with a bayonet mount fits on a camera body. There is even a case for the Sony Xperia Z smartphone that has the QX bayonet built in to the reverse, so there is no need to use the grip. You just click the lens on to the camera case as if you were mounting the lens.

Connecting the QX cameras electronically to a smart device is surprisingly simple. If you have the Sony Play Memories Mobile app installed on your tablet or smartphone, and you have Near Field Communication, all you have to do is touch the QX camera to the device and the two will connect via Wi-Fi and the app will open automatically. I tested this function using a Sony Xperia Z1 smartphone and it worked flawlessly. I was able

to connect and start shooting in seconds.

However, the QX cameras don't just work with Sony devices. I connected both the QX10 and QX100 to an Apple iPhone 5, although without NFC it does require a little more effort. First you need to go to the phone's Wi-Fi settings and select the QX camera. You will then be asked for the specific password for that camera, which can be found printed on the inside of the camera's battery cover. With the camera and phone connected via Wi-Fi, all that is required is the app to be opened. It will take 1–2secs to load, but once the final connection has been made the live view from the camera is streamed to the display.

I was expecting the on-screen display to lag a little behind any movements I made to the QX camera but, generally, the screen is responsive. You are never going to shoot sports or fast-moving subjects with such a device, but for travel images, portraits, documentary and landscape images the streaming is more than fast enough to be classed as 'in real time'.

Of course, the connectivity works two ways. When I pressed the on-screen shutter button I expected the camera to take a second or so to respond to the command. Again,



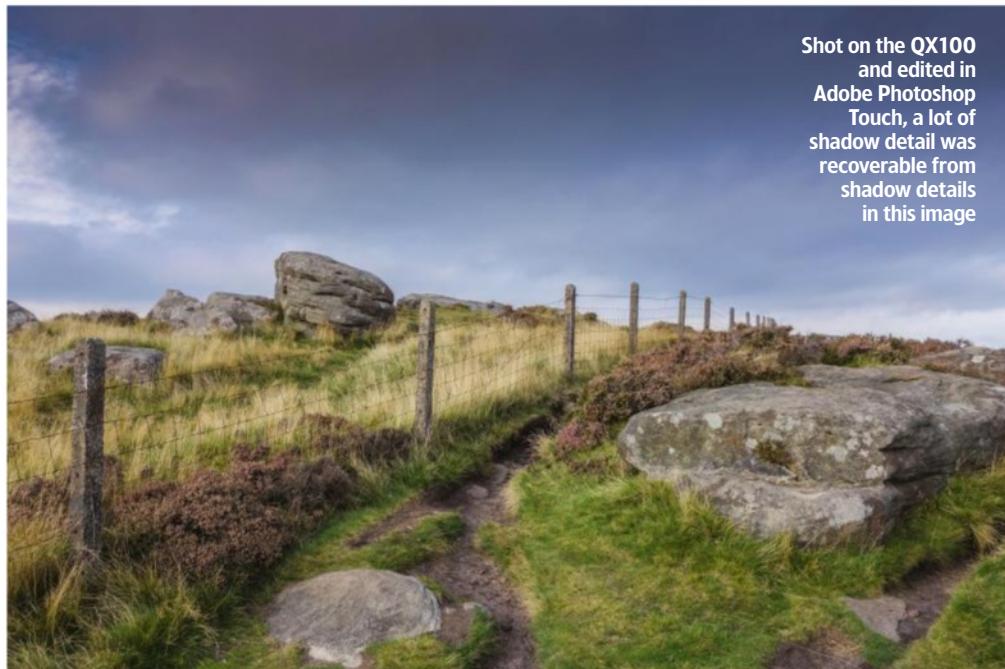
I was pleasantly surprised by the responsiveness of the on-screen shutter and zoom buttons – there was only a slight lag. However, with zoom controls and a shutter button on the camera itself, this is a far better way of taking an image. The camera reacts as quickly as it would when using any compact camera, so if the timing of a shot is absolutely critical I would recommend using the shutter button rather than the virtual on-screen button.

For me, the real beauty of the QX cameras – particularly the QX100 – is that they don't have to be tied to the smart device. It takes a while to get used to the idea of holding the camera in one hand and the screen in the other, but once it sinks in it is quite liberating

when it comes to composition. Holding the camera at arm's length, way above my head, and composing an image was easy, and so too was placing the QX100 at ground level and composing.

At one point I was shooting a landscape image and set the QX100 on a tripod, while reviewing the composition on a tablet with a 9in screen. It felt a lot like using a large-format camera, and I was able to really fine-tune the composition as all the key elements were clearly visible on the screen. However, the more I thought about it, the more I wanted to work the opposite way, with the tablet screen static and the camera free. In this way I would have the freedom to move around and compose the images precisely, as well as explore angles that would be difficult for my tripod to achieve, while keeping half an eye on the large view provided by the tablet.

Of course, these features aren't anything new – Wi-Fi connectivity for live view shooting has been around for a few years – but the lack of viewfinder or screen actively encourages you to remove the camera from the display and explore different compositions.



Shot on the QX100 and edited in Adobe Photoshop Touch, a lot of shadow detail was recoverable from shadow details in this image

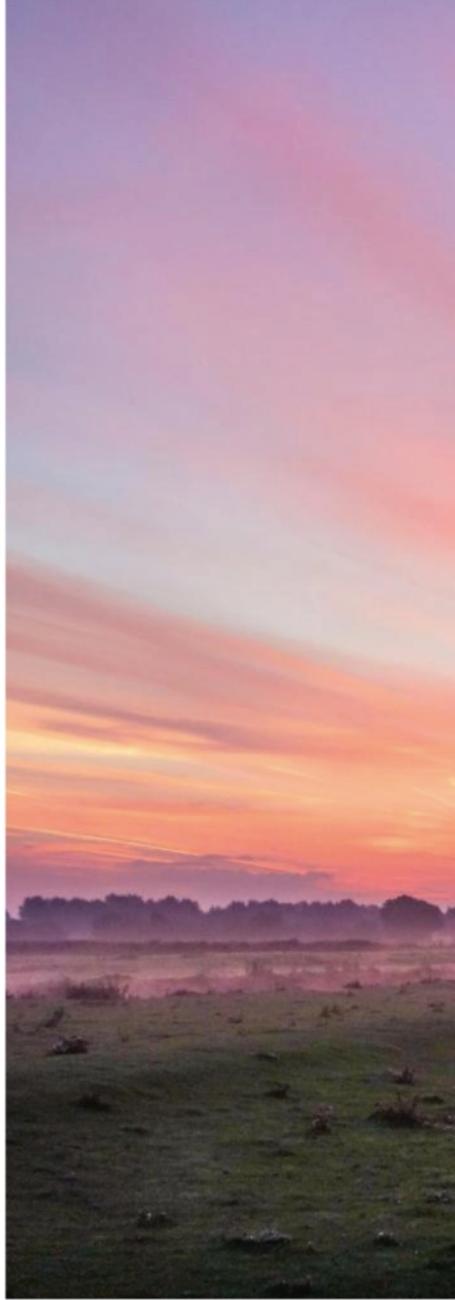
 switch on the exterior. All the other controls are accessed via the Sony Play Memories Mobile app for iOS and Android devices. The QX cameras connect via Wi-Fi to a smart device and the Sony app then streams the live view from the cameras.

Each camera provides photographers with a different level of control. The more consumer-targeted QX10 is quite limited, with just auto, intelligent auto and program modes available. Exposure compensation is available in program mode, and it is possible to change the white-balance setting.

The QX100 is more advanced, adding aperture priority and manual focusing. However, it still lacks a few key features that would really make it stand out. On both cameras the ISO sensitivity is set automatically, and images are only saved as JPEG files, with no option to save raw images.

While the point-and-shoot market should be quite happy with the QX10's automatic ISO setting and shouldn't miss a raw-shooting mode, those investing in the high-quality 1in sensor and f/1.8-4.9 3.6x Carl Zeiss zoom lens will demand more control.

Larger raw files could easily be saved to the memory card, with a lower 2-million-pixel file saved to the connected device. Currently, there is the option to save a full-resolution JPEG to the QX camera and a 2-million-pixel image to the smart device, then transfer full-resolution images on an individual basis. Working in this way is clearly



EDITING THE IMAGES

THE APPEAL of mobile-phone photography lies largely in the ability it lends us to shoot an image, edit it and share it with the world within seconds, and the QX cameras are no

different. Two-million-pixel, low-resolution images can be opened and edited in Instagram or other applications, then uploaded online or shared via email. However, the QX cameras can also transfer a 20-million-pixel, high-resolution image to the connected device, although this is not really any different from using any other Wi-Fi compatible camera. In fact, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 II, which has the same sensor and lens as the QX100, can transfer images via Wi-Fi.

Editing a full-sized image on a mobile phone isn't ideal.



While basic brightness and colour adjustments are fairly straightforward, and adding a gradient to help darken a sky isn't too tricky, it is difficult to cut out objects and retouch an image.

Editing on a tablet is possible. In fact, most of the images shown in this feature were taken on the QX100 and edited using Adobe Photoshop Touch on a Sony Xperia Tablet S. By using a stylus with the tablet and zooming in on the full-resolution image, I could dodge and burn with some precision, and isolate areas to cut out. Photoshop Touch has a reasonably good set of tools for performing basic image edits, including layers and blending modes.

While images edited on a tablet lacked the finesse of those finished on a computer, they weren't awful. In fact, for social events and holiday photos the QX100 and photo-editing applications could produce some excellent images.

designed to preserve space on the smart device by not filling it with high-resolution files when most people will simply upload them to Instagram or Facebook. It also saves the confusion of trying to transfer raw images to the device and then finding that these cannot be opened in the most commonly used mobile image-editing software. Of course, the solution would be to save raw and JPEG images to the internal QX camera memory, and a low-resolution image to the connected device, but then things become complicated and the device would potentially slow down. However, I still think that most enthusiast photographers want the option to shoot raw images.

IMAGE QUALITY

The 20.9-million-pixel, 1in sensor in the QX100 is the same as that found in the RX100 II. Although raw shooting isn't



available, the JPEG resolution is still very high. It is clear that the level of compression has been kept to a fairly moderate level and the QX100 can resolve around 30 on our test chart, which is what we would expect from a 20-million-pixel-plus camera. Noise is also well controlled, with very little colour noise at any sensitivity settings. There is obviously some noise reduction applied as the resolution drops to around 24 at sensitivities above ISO 1600.

With no control available over the ISO sensitivity, it is worth keeping an eye on the shutter speed as it gives an indication of the sensitivity that the camera is using. Obviously, as the shutter speed increases, the QX100 will increase the ISO sensitivity settings – along with the risk of camera shake. If you can use a large aperture without the shallower depth of field becoming detrimental to the image, it is worth doing so to ensure that

Above: I was surprised at the quality of images I was able to take with the QX100, although the JPEG compression was a little high

Right: Some careful editing reveals just how capable the QX100 is, although images needed to be edited carefully and not pushed too far



'Sony is allowing other developers to work with its code and develop applications that can control the QX cameras'

 the lowest sensitivity is used. Images taken in bright sunshine look great. They are full of detail and I found that I could sharpen the JPEG files to add a little more 'bite'.

Sadly, there are no different image styles to choose from in the Sony Play Memories mobile app. For instance, I often shoot in black & white, saving a raw file in case I want a colour image. Unfortunately, there is no black & white option. In fact, there are no options to change the image style whatsoever.

I feel this is something of an oversight on Sony's behalf, although perhaps this omission is due to the processing power that would be required to preview the colour effects live on-screen. Given the number of different devices and screens that the QX100 may be used with, some older or lower specification smart phones may not have the necessary power needed to stream the live view and process the colour of the image.

Generally, images look fairly natural and are not overly saturated. There is a contrast curve applied to images, with shadow areas lifted slightly from how they are presented in the on-screen live image. The result is that the QX100 has an impressive dynamic range. Obviously, we could only test JPEGs,

rather than raw files, but our test showed that the QX100 has a dynamic range of around 11.3EV, which is impressive for a camera of this size and type.

Where the dynamic range is lacking is in the highlight details of skies. I did get some burnt-out white highlights, so I found that underexposing images and pushing the shadow areas when editing is the best tactic, particularly as at lower sensitivities shadows can be lightened without introducing too much noise.

Overall, the images produced by the Cyber-shot DSC-QX100 are as good as those from the Cyber-Shot DSC-RX100 II. It is just a shame that there isn't more user customisation available within the Sony Play Memories Mobile app to define their look. It will be interesting to see how other developers use the QX100, with Camera 360 for Android being the first app due to be compatible with both QX cameras. Camera 360 may end up being better than Sony's app if it allows more shooting and control functions. What is great, though, is that Sony is allowing other developers to work with its code and develop applications that can control the QX cameras. It will be interesting to see how third parties work with the camera's various functions. **AP**

SONY Cyber-shot DSC-QX100

RRP	£399
Sensor	20.9-million-pixel, 1in Exmor R CMOS sensor
Lens	Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* 28-100mm f/1.8-4.9 (35mm equivalent)
Lens elements	7 elements in 6 groups
Image size	5472 x 3648 pixels
ISO sensitivity	160-6400
Metering	Multi pattern with ±3EV exposure compensation
Focusing	Single-shot AF, manual focus, touch AF, face detection
Images	JPEG (full resolution and 2-million-pixel preview)
Battery	NP-BN Li-Ion
Memory card	Micro SD
Connectivity	Wi-Fi, NFC and Micro USB
Size	62.5 x 62.5 x 52.2mm
Weight	179g (including battery and memory card)

SONY Cyber-shot DSC-QX10

RRP	£179
Sensor	18.9-million pixel, 1/2.3in Exmor R CMOS sensor
Lens	27.5-275mm f/3.3-5.9 (35mm equivalent)
Lens elements	9 elements in 7 Groups
Image size	4896 x 3672 pixels
ISO Sensitivity	100-3200
Metering	Multi pattern with ±2EV exposure compensation
Focusing	Multi-point AF, touch AF, manual focus, face detection
Images	JPEG (full resolution and 2-million-pixel preview)
Battery	NP-BN Li-Ion
Memory Card	Micro SD
Connectivity	Wi-Fi, NFC and Micro USB
Size	62.4 x 61.8 x 30mm
Weight	105g (including battery and memory card)

Verdict

THE SONY Cyber-shot DSC-QX10 and QX100 are more than just mobile-phone 'accessories'. The QX10 will appeal to many consumers as a replacement for a compact camera. Being small and light, it is the perfect accompaniment to a smartphone.

Although the QX100 is the superior camera, it is caught in a strange place in the market. Without the ability to change sensitivity or shoot raw images, it lacks two significant features that enthusiast photographers require. Furthermore, neither camera carries a flash, and I would like to see more image and shooting settings. With those features we would end up with the RX100 II – which costs some £250 more.

What you get with the QX100 is a device that offers flexibility and connectivity. It is a fantastic replacement compact camera, but as an alternative to something more advanced, such as the RX100 II, it is restricted – particularly with regard to shooting raw files.

In terms of image quality the QX100 is great, producing the sorts of images we'd expect from the combination of lens and



sensor. Also, having a zoom lens and f/1.8 aperture available when shooting on a mobile phone is a significant improvement on the standard smartphone cameras.

It will be interesting to see where the products go from here. All the issues I have raised are software-based, and most could be dealt with via an update to the app. It is also possible that

third-party developers may create their own ways to use the QX camera range, as Sony has allowed developers to work with its Application Program Interface (API).

What is clear is that how we use and interact with cameras is changing. The question now is how such products, and photography, will evolve from here.



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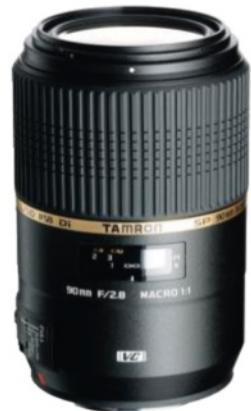
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BACK-UP LENS



I have had a Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 lens for a while and I love it. I'm now at the stage where I am backing up most of my equipment. I don't want to buy another Nikon 70-200mm because of the price, so does anyone know of a similar lens for a cheaper price? **newfocushphotography**

A Apart from a couple of high-profile professionals with specialist needs, I've not come across many people who have felt a need to have back-up lenses. Cameras, yes, but not lenses. The main reason is that lenses rarely fail and, if they do, it's possible to work around the problem with another lens.

Moreover, when you say you *don't* want a Nikon 70-200mm, that's exactly what you're doing – adding an extra lens to your kit, rather than a back-up lens. A genuine back-up would be another Nikon 70-200mm zoom, with all the characteristics you

have come to love. Any other lens will, by definition, be 'different' and there's a risk that you will end up disappointed by your 'cheap' alternative.

Unless you have a very specific need for two near-identical zooms, my advice would be to look at your existing lenses and ask yourself if there's a gap, be it focal-length range, maximum aperture or something else. Then see what lens might best fit it. In that way, you will be *expanding* your photographic options, rather than simply duplicating your kit with potentially cheaper, lower-quality lenses. **Chris Gatum**



FOR THE BIRDS

Q I am an amateur bird photographer and use a Canon EOS 550D with a Canon 500mm lens. I have been thinking of upgrading the camera to try to obtain better image quality, but it seems that the new releases in this range, including the EOS 700D, have not really offered significant improvements for my use.

An alternative would be to switch to full-frame, but I have heard conflicting views about this, as the choice seems to be a possible gain in image quality at the expense of the 1.6x crop factor.

My intuition is that full-frame might be better for relative close-ups, but that the 1.6x crop factor might be better for

longer-range shots (the latter, of course, being the most common situation in bird photography). Is that correct?

My guess is that the EOS 750D, when it arrives, will probably have more pixels with possibly better image quality and may therefore be a worthwhile upgrade. What are the relative merits of full-frame, and if full-frame is *not* the way to go, is it sensible to wait for the EOS 750D or go for an alternative Canon?

Jim Meikle

A Jim, the first thing I'd suggest is that you look at your images and ask yourself what it is about them that isn't 'good enough'. Yes, some cameras



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are better than others, and it's possible to 'outgrow' your camera, but it seems as though some people (not necessarily you) are quick to see a new camera as the solution to a problem that perhaps isn't really there. Sometimes, for example, a 'bad' lens can create issues with image quality, as can slight camera shake, a dirty lens or a dusty sensor.

However, if you are certain that you have outgrown your camera's capabilities, then upgrading the body is a logical step. If price isn't a factor, then I would go with a full-frame camera as this will give you bigger photosites (with better light-gathering properties) and therefore better image quality. The 1.6x crop factor that you cite as an advantage of the smaller-format sensors happens only because of the sensor size, so you can recreate the effect by cropping a larger image. Nikon's full-frame D4 and D600 feature full-frame FX and cropped DX modes for this very purpose.

This means losing some pixels around the edges of the frame, but as these areas are where you would generally find the least pleasing lens characteristics (vignetting, distortion and chromatic aberration) it's not the end of the world. Nor, indeed, is the loss of pixels from the image. You rarely need all the pixels offered by contemporary digital cameras, unless you are viewing images at 'actual pixels' magnification on-screen or want to produce billboard-sized prints. Also, more pixels can create problems, as well as resolving them – the Nikon D800, for example, requires a very specific approach if you want to get the best from its high-resolution sensor.

Holding out for the EOS 750D based solely on it having 'more pixels' wouldn't be my recommendation. Instead, I would refer you back to the start of my answer: what is wrong with your EOS 550D and why are the images it produces not good enough? If you are adamant that nothing can be done to improve your photography other than buying a new camera, then a full-frame model and your editing program's crop tool would be my suggestion. Or, better still, concentrate on developing your fieldcraft skills so you can get physically closer to your subjects and exploit as many of the pixels on the full-frame sensor as possible. I would suggest the 22.2-million-pixel EOS 6D as the obvious 'entry-level' full-frame Canon camera to consider. **Chris Gatum**

AP GLOSSARY

Leaf shutter

As Ivor Matanle notes in his answer to David Jackson (below), the Mamiya Prismat originally came in two distinct types, one with a focal-plane shutter and the other with a leaf shutter, but what is a leaf shutter and how do they differ?

Today, the majority of cameras have a focal-plane shutter, which sits just in front of the sensor (or film). When an exposure is made, a metal, plastic or cloth curtain (or 'shutter blind') opens to start the exposure and a second curtain closes to end the exposure. The time it takes for this to happen is the shutter speed. With very fast shutter speeds this can mean that the second curtain begins to close before the first one has travelled all the way across the frame, effectively exposing the sensor to a fast-moving 'slit' of light.

A leaf shutter, as found in a wide range of medium and large-format camera set-ups (as well as some digital compacts), differs in a number of ways. First, the shutter is found in the lens, not in the camera body, usually located close to the aperture blades. Rather like a variable aperture, a leaf shutter typically consists of a number of blades, and

these blades open and close rapidly to make the exposure.

However, with a leaf shutter the sensor is exposed in its entirety, or not at all, so there's no travelling slit. For daylight photography this doesn't make a difference, but with flash photography it means that the camera can sync at all shutter speeds, rather than being limited by a maximum sync speed (typically around 1/200sec). This is a definite advantage for studio photographers working with flash as they don't have to worry about the shutter speed. It is also beneficial to photographers looking to mix flash and daylight outdoors on a bright day, or those who want to use a wide aperture setting and fast shutter speed with flash.

The downside is that a lens with a built-in shutter is always going to cost more than a comparable optic without a shutter. It also increases the fragility of the lens, though, as there are more things to go wrong. On the flip side, the cameras that use leaf shutters tend to be simpler and far more robust – Hasselblad's legendary V system is an obvious example.

PRISMAT POSER



I have been given a Mamiya Prismat camera (model CPH), but the shutter mechanism does not appear to work correctly. It has been left in a loft, unused for some time, so do you have any advice where it can be looked at, serviced or repaired? **David Jackson**

A The Mamiya Prismat range of the early 1960s was a confusing range of cameras, as the various models, all called Prismat, came in two fundamentally different designs. The Mamiya Prismat NP of 1961 was the first 35mm single-lens reflex made by Mamiya, and had a conventional focal-plane shutter and no exposure meter. The Mamiya Prismat PH, also of 1961, was a totally different camera with a Seikosha leaf shutter behind its interchangeable 48mm f/1.9 lens and a selenium-cell exposure meter mounted in the prism housing.

In 1963, Mamiya launched an improved version of the Prismat PH with a cadmium sulphide (CdS) exposure meter, powered by a PX625 mercury oxide battery. This battery is now defunct, but approximate equivalents are available. Try the Small Battery Company on 0208 871 3730 or email sales@smallbattery.company.org.uk.

The Mamiya Prismat CPH and its Seikosha shutter were clever and innovative designs. The Prismat CPH overcame some of the complexities from which all leaf-shutter

SLRs suffered, but, as with all the others, that complexity was still their downfall.

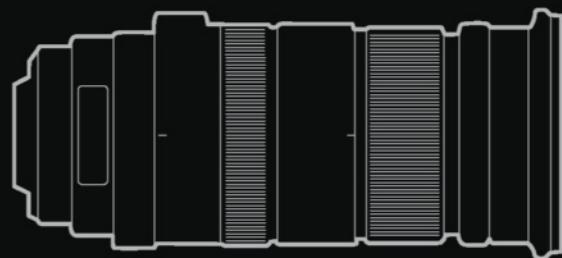
Few people will undertake repairs to leaf-shutter SLRs, since spares are non-existent, and even if there were spares repairing them is fraught with difficulty and usually uneconomic. I suggest you try repairers Ed Trzoska in Leicester (tel: 01162 674 247) and Clive Christian in Uckfield, East Sussex (tel: 01825 766 202). However, don't be surprised if they decline to work on your Mamiya Prismat. **Ivor Matanle**



The Mamiya Prismat PH

DSLR*

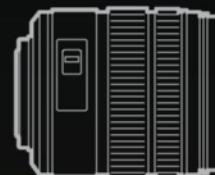
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Man in a chair

Morris Clifford

Panasonic DMC-TZ6, 300mm equivalent focal length, 1/400sec at f/5.6, ISO 125

THIS image came on a disc that Morris had labelled 'unusual holiday photographs' and this is certainly not your standard 'happy holiday' picture. The reason I picked this particular shot was initially because of its quirky composition. We can often become bogged down by 'rules' regarding what should go where, and while it's good to know these things (and apply them), it's also good to know when avoiding convention might create a stronger result.

Here, for example, it's as if Morris has taken the rulebook and thrown it out of the window. The strongest line in the image (the division between the sand and the water) is almost central, which is usually an ill-advised move, and there's a dark wall of seaweed at the bottom of the frame that acts like a visual barrier to our entry into

Original



While Morris's image may seem an incredibly uninviting shot, it does tell the story of one man's desire to sit on his own and sulk after an argument with a group of friends

Edited



the shot (with a horizontal band of sand above it that reinforces the 'none shall pass' message). There's certainly no suggestion of any lead lines to draw us to the subject, and nothing about the composition really tries to entice us into the frame – almost the opposite, in fact.

Instead, all we have is the figure at the right to draw our gaze. His dark chair stands out against the brighter blue of the sea, and the combination of this contrast and the figure's irregular shape among an otherwise linear scene is the only 'interest' we are offered. Even then, though, it's not made easy for us: the figure is small in the frame, he's positioned far to the right, he's got his back turned to the camera and he's looking out of the shot. Everything about his position and pose encourages us not to look at him.

Now, there are two ways of looking at this. My initial reaction was that Morris had taken an incredibly uninviting shot, with very few positive traits. I'm sure that some of you will feel exactly the same about it. However, when I read the story about the shot,

my opinion swung in totally the opposite direction – this shot is a great example of how composition can create narrative.

Why? Well, according to Morris, 'This man had been with a group of friends. As we approached, there was obviously some argument and he picked up his deckchair in a huff and parked himself at the sea's edge. The act seemed to say everything about what was going through his mind.' It is not only the act that reflects the man's mindset, but also the way in which Morris has photographed him. Whether it was intentional or not, all the 'negative' aspects of the composition listed previously are precisely what tells the man's story – he simply wants to sit on his own and sulk.

If I have one criticism it's the horizon, as it really shouldn't be sloping like that. A quick tickle with the straighten option in Photoshop's Crop tool soon fixes it, though. I was also tempted to suggest lifting the exposure and colour a little, but on reflection the muted and dull interpretation, with its cool colour cast, is perhaps better suited to the man's 'blue mood'.

Colour lift



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Concentration Chris Dixon

Nikon D700, 24-70mm at 60mm equivalent
focal length, 1/60sec at f/2.8, ISO 200

CHRIS Dixon's black & white photograph is a classic documentary-style study. Having shot in various gloomy interiors myself, I know the challenges encountered and Chris has done an excellent job of overcoming them, resulting in a natural-looking image that is sharp and well exposed.

In a situation like this it would be easy to use a shutter speed that is too slow, resulting in a shake-ridden mess, or to crank up the ISO to the point that noise



PICTURE
OF THE
WEEK

obscures detail, but Chris has got it spot-on here. Although his shutter speed was fast enough to avoid camera shake, it's not come through an excessively high ISO and the balance is perfect. I particularly like that the 1/60sec exposure time has allowed some motion blur, as this adds some action that instantly informs us this is a live shot, rather than a held pose.

The photograph was then converted into monochrome using Lightroom, and Chris has

clearly gone to great lengths to ensure that as much detail as possible has been retained in the highlights. However, if I have one minor quibble it's that the man's hair is perhaps a little 'compressed' tonally (the highlights are arguably not as white as they should be). I adjusted the white slider in Levels from 255 to 240-245 to add a little extra 'sparkle'. This is a personal preference, though, and not something that should detract from this week's picture of the week award.

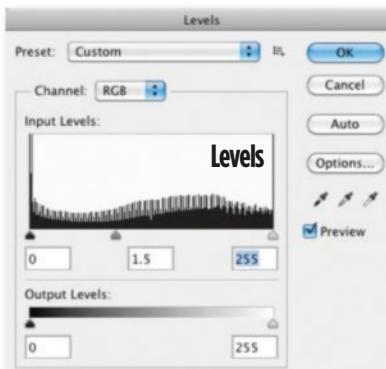


Tractor in the snow Patrick Edwards

Canon PowerShot G7, 35mm equivalent
focal length, 1/250sec at f/2.8, ISO 500

PATRICK didn't include much information with his shot, so I'm not sure whether he intended this image to look like this or not. The Exif data doesn't help much, either: it tells me that the photograph was taken using automatic white balance, evaluative metering and no exposure compensation was applied. This might explain why the shot looks as it does – snow can fool a camera into underexposing and it's possible that the white balance enhanced the blue.

However, my feeling is that Patrick has used his editing software to enhance the colour of the shot and increase the idea of the coolness of winter. Perhaps he wanted to suggest dusk. In itself this is a laudable aim, but the end result looks a little too



false. So, my suggestion would be to go back to the original powdery-white scene.

If the initial shot isn't available, then a few tweaks to this version will do the job. Using Levels allows us to make the whites white (by choosing the grey Dropper and clicking on a neutral area) and lift the exposure to prevent it looking dingy. He could consider a square crop as well, which would tighten up the frame and emphasise the tractor. Either way, the result is a potential Christmas card.



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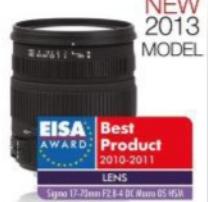
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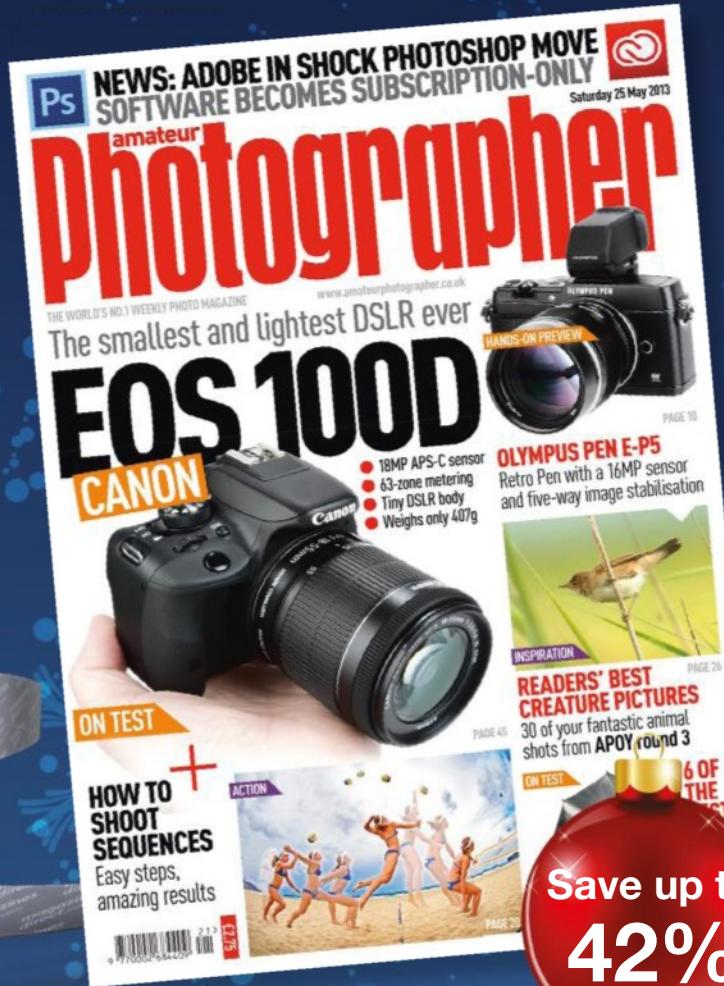
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When you can't find the white-balance button as the sun is hanging below the horizon preparing to create a dawn spectacular, it is hard to select the mode you need capture it in all its splendour.

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with limited light, the torch will prove indispensable for astrophotographers, sunrise

landscapers, night-time architecture fans and street documenters, to name just a few. Press the button on this little torch and suddenly you can see to screw in that filter, to switch from AF to manual focus, to inspect the spirit level on your tripod and to press the menu button to alter your settings. You won't have to fumble

with lens changes, swapping memory cards or with finding the spare battery buried at the bottom of your camera bag.

The torch is bright enough to produce some extra light too, to pick out close objects or to light up something small. Next week we'll show you how you can use the torch for 'painting with light' or, if you are feeling energetic, you can run about in the scene yourself drawing patterns and shapes in a battery-powered firework display.

So make sure you pick up a copy of Amateur Photographer next week or, better still, reserve one with your newsagent – because then you won't miss this truly useful gift

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Miranda FvT

Ivor Matanle traces the history of a Miranda that is fondly remembered

THE MIRANDA FvT appeared in 1966, some 12 years after the first Miranda model and about six years after the Miranda D, the first version generally available in Britain after import controls were relaxed. The FvT was far from the first Miranda and it was not the last, which came some ten years later, yet it seems to be the most memorable Miranda for many classic camera users.

The FvT was memorable because it brought together in one amateur package features that made professional SLRs, like the Nikon F, so desirable to impecunious amateurs in the mid-1960s. Interchangeable viewfinders, instant-return mirror, TTL exposure measurement from the screen and quality auto-diaphragm interchangeable lenses were all there, plus the feature missing in non-Miranda SLRs – screw and bayonet lens mounts in the same camera – all for under £100. The TTL prism with CdS exposure meter, although requiring manual transfer of exposure-meter readings, was advanced.

The 5cm f/1.9 Auto Miranda lens (bayonet mount) delivered high resolution with lower contrast than most Japanese lenses of the time. In fact, performance was more typical of European lenses. The fabric focal-plane shutter, with speeds from 1-1/1000sec, although inclined to tapering problems 40-odd years on, was reliable and less noisy than East German shutters of the period. This was a fine camera at a fine price.

Actually, the Miranda FvT was an upgrade of the Miranda F of 1963. If you remove the metered prism of the FvT and replace it with a plain prism you have a Miranda F, aside from an engraved 'Fv' on the front panel and the absence of a stop-down control on the side of the mirror box present on most examples of the Miranda F. Yet the Miranda range is like that – wonderfully confusing.

HOW THE RANGE DEVELOPED

The first Miranda SLR was the Miranda T of 1955, the second Japanese single-lens reflex and the first with a pentaprism viewfinder. Initially marketed as the Orion Miranda T (the name of the Orion Camera Company was changed to Miranda Camera Company in 1957), it was offered with a variety of preset diaphragm lenses using the 44mm screw lens mount, which was found on all subsequent Miranda models. The cloth



Miranda FvT

Fitted with the T metering prism and a 50mm f/1.9 Auto Miranda lens

focal-plane shutter had speeds to 1/500sec, a shutter-speed dial that rotated during exposure and a lever to set slow speeds. The shutter winding and film advance were by knob.

The Miranda TII, with a top speed of 1/1000sec, appeared about a year later, had a black exposure counter ring and a folding rewind crank. It usually came with an Arco 5cm f/2.4 preset lens. The rather similar Miranda S was an economy model,

Early lever-wind Miranda models

Left to right: A Miranda D with 50mm f/1.9 PAD (preset automatic diaphragm) lens; a Miranda C with a similar 50mm f/1.9 PAD lens; and a Miranda A, also with a 50mm f/1.9 PAD lens

with no slow speeds and a Miranda f/2.8 preset lens. The Miranda ST of 1959 had the 1-1/500sec shutter speed range of the T, the folding rewind crank and the 50mm f/2.8 preset Miranda lens.

During 1958, Miranda offered its first lever-wind cameras and its first bayonet-mount preset auto diaphragm (PAD) lenses. These, like the auto-diaphragm lenses for Exakta, had an arm extending from the lens





Miranda D

With 50mm f/1.9 PAD lens, and beside it is an example of a rare 55mm f/2.8 preset lens sold in the UK market only as a budget alternative standard lens



Two Miranda F cameras

With waist-level viewfinder and 200mm f/3.5 Soligor (left), and plain prism and 50mm f/1.9 Mirada Soligor (right). Both lenses have internally coupled automatic diaphragms

mount bearing a shutter button that first closed the spring-loaded diaphragm to a preset aperture and then fired the shutter. The Miranda A had a fastest shutter speed of 1/500sec, while the All had 1/1000sec. During 1959 came the Miranda B (with instant-return mirror) and the C (with delayed action).

The first Miranda marketed in Britain was the Miranda D of 1960, usually with a 5cm f/1.9 Mirada PAD lens, although various preset lenses were available. A development of the D, known as the DR but not marked as such, was marketed from 1962 with a microprism spot in the centre of the focusing screen. Early interchangeable prisms and waist-level finders for the D had the word 'Miranda' in upper and lower case. During DR production this was changed to 'MIRANDA', which then continued for the rest of Miranda production.

AN EPIC YEAR

Miranda stole a march on its Japanese rivals in 1960 with the first version of the Automex, the first SLR with full-aperture coupled metering (but not TTL metering) and the first Miranda with internal automatic diaphragm actuation. A selenium-cell

exposure meter was mounted in the front of the newly widened prism housing, and the Automex thereby also became the first Miranda whose interchangeable viewfinders were of a different size to previous ones.

From this point on, Miranda had two quite distinct lines of camera development happening simultaneously. I suspect that this was simply due to controversy within the

Rare 1950s Miranda cameras and lenses

An Orion Miranda T with 5cm f/1.9 Zunow preset lens (left) and a Miranda B with a 5cm f/1.9 PAD Mirada Soligor. Behind them are a chrome preset 105mm f/2.8 Supreme in full focusing mount (left) and a black 105mm f/2.8 PAD Mirada Soligor (right). Picture by Craig Holmes



company and the industry during the early 1960s about whether cameras with built-in exposure meters would ever catch on.

For us in Britain, further confusion arises, 50 years down the line, because the dates of introduction of the various models as referred to in Japan, the USA and elsewhere do not tie in with the dates, even years, when those models were announced as 'new' in AP or by advertisers in AP. I will continue to use the 'international' dates.

In 1962, a slightly developed version of the Automex was announced as the Automex II. This had a meter whose ASA range extended to 1600 instead of the 400 of the original Automex. Not until 1965 did the Automex gain a battery-powered CdS meter in the form of the Automex III.

Meanwhile, development of 'traditional' Mirandas continued. The Miranda F of 1963 offered internal automatic diaphragm operation, and a shutter-speed dial that had settings for all speeds from 1-1/1000sec (or 1/500sec in some cases) on one dial, which did not rotate during exposure. It retained the original interchangeable viewfinder size and fitting, and the first version of the critical-focusing magnifying viewfinder appeared. The first exposure meter marketed for the F was a neat, if slightly large meter that fitted around the shutter-speed dial. The FV, the basis of the FvT, had a removable shutter-speed dial for attaching a clip-on meter. This was rapidly followed by the TTL FvT metered prism.

That year, 1966, was extraordinary for Miranda, for the FvT was followed in the same year by the Miranda G, the first Miranda with interchangeable focusing screens and mirror lock-up. This accepted a quite different snap-on exposure meter, and a new accessory shoe that fitted under the rewind crank. As if that were not enough, 1966 also brought the first fully TTL metering Miranda with an internal meter sensor, which was beneath a slotted instant-return mirror. This was the first Sensorex, similar in appearance to the Automex. It was followed by a Sensorex C in 1970 with an added accessory shoe, then the Sensorex II of 1971 with an improved prism, hotshoe and extended ASA range to 3200. All the

1955
Orion Miranda T appears in Japan

1957/58
Miranda TII appears.
Miranda A (1st leverwind model) announced

1960
Miranda D announced, first Miranda marketed in the UK. Miranda Automex launched

1963
Miranda F released

1966
Miranda FvT. Sensorex, first version, full-aperture TTL

1969
Miranda Sensomat with stopped-down TTL released

1971
Miranda Sensorex II launched

1975
Miranda DX3 announced

1976
Miranda files for bankruptcy in December

WATCH OUT FOR

Shutter problems are common, particularly tapering or failure due to broken tapes. D and DR cameras and their PAD lenses suffer from diaphragm problems. Most Mirandas will benefit from professional servicing. Contact Clive Christian in East Sussex on 01825 766 202, who has been working on my Mirandas.

HOW MUCH DO THEY COST?

A good fully operational D or DR with PAD lens should fetch £50-£60, a good F with f/1.9 maybe £40 and the FvT £45. The Automex and Sensorex models are more common, but have superior specification. These cost £35-£50 in good order.

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



A Minolta SRT101, often available at prices below those of Miranda FvT or G cameras, although the early version with black shutter speed dial (pictured here) fetches more.



Automex and Sensorex models to this point required the Miranda range of lenses with an external meter-coupling arm.

The next major development, also in 1971, was the Auto Sensorex EE, the first Miranda model with its principal shutter release on the top-plate, and the first with internal meter coupling via a new 'E' range of compact and lightweight metal-mount lenses from 28mm to 200mm. The Auto Sensorex EE was the best-selling Miranda model, and with the Sensorex II and EE-2 shared yet another viewfinder fitting.

While all this was going on, in 1969 Miranda had launched a stopped-down TTL metering development of the Miranda F, marketed as the Sensomat, and incorporating the TTL mirror and sensor of the Sensorex. Sensomat viewfinders are compatible with those of the D, F, and G models. An improved version, the Sensomat RE of 1971, suffered from well-publicised electrical reliability problems that contributed to Miranda's eventual demise.

The last two models were the Miranda DX3, a fixed-prism camera with full-aperture match-needle TTL metering plus a viewfinder shutter-speed display and electronically timed shutter, announced in 1975, and the Sensorex REII, the last model with interchangeable viewfinders. As part of a complex financial debacle involving both Miranda in Tokyo and the US distributor Allied Impex, the Miranda Corporation filed for bankruptcy in Tokyo in December 1976.

MIRANDA LENSES

There were several series of lenses, to some extent described already. Until 1959, all had manually preset diaphragms. The introduction of the lever-wind cameras in 1958/59 brought externally actuated preset automatic diaphragms in the 50mm and 105mm lenses, and, I am told, in 35mm and 135mm lenses. Most non-50mm Miranda lenses remained preset.

However, 1960 was also the year when the Miranda D appeared with PAD lenses, a new series of lenses was introduced with the Automex. Each had a fully automatic diaphragm operated from within the camera body, and an external arm as part of the aperture ring, which coupled to a matching arm on the body to transfer the set aperture to the metering system. The range included 28mm f/2.8, 35mm f/2.8, 50mm f/1.4, 50mm f/1.9, 85mm f/1.8, 105mm f/2.8, 135mm f/3.5, 135mm f/2.8, 180mm f/2.8,



Miranda G

With 'T' metering prism, 50mm f/1.9 and the late accessory shoe fitted under the rewind crank

200mm f/3.5 and a 52mm f/2.8 Macro lens for macro work. These remained appropriate for all the Automex, Sensorex and Sensomat models prior to the Sensorex EE. On the introduction of the Miranda F in 1963, this same series of lenses became available minus the meter-coupling arm, as neither the F/FvT nor G cameras needed it.

In the mid-1970s, concurrent with the Auto Sensorex EE, the E lenses became available in 28mm f/2.8, 35mm f/2.8, 50mm f/1.8 and so on, as above.

MIRANDA ACCESSORIES

An extensive list of accessories was offered in the UK market from 1960-1976. Included were clip-on external meters, Focabell bellows units, microscope adaptors, waist-level viewfinders, 15x magnifying finders, extension tubes, and the usual range of filters and lens hoods. AP

Accessories

Back (left-right): Late-type waist-level viewfinder; clip-on exposure meter for G; CdS metered prism with external cell 'window'; and TTL metered prism for G. Front (left-right): Miranda filters; and P-M adapter to fit M42 lenses to Miranda bodies



Later Miranda equipment

Back (left-right): A 135mm f/3.5 with coupling arm; original Sensorex with 50mm f/1.9; Automex III with 50mm f/1.9; Sensomat RE with 35mm f/2.8 Auto Miranda; and Sensorex II with 50mm f/1.8 Auto Miranda. Front (left-right): A 35mm f/2.8 with arm; 28mm f/2.8 with arm; 135mm f/2.8, no arm; 80-200mm f/3.5 zoom; and DX-3 with 50mm f/1.8

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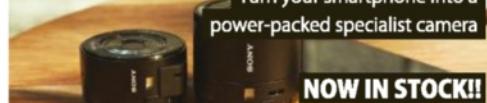
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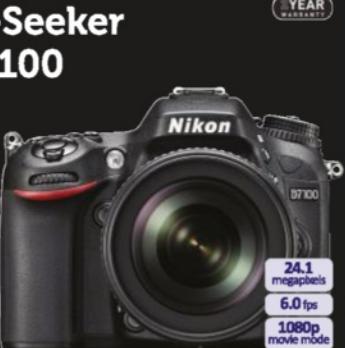
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D7100



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D4 Body

£4239

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★★★★★

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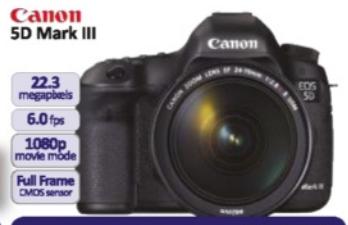
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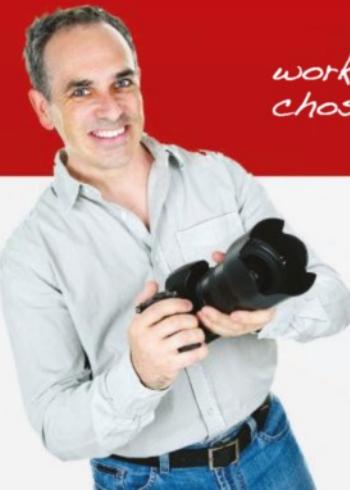
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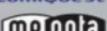
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Nikon and Lumiquest lighting demo with speedlight and lighting

Monday 4th November



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Agfa Ambi Siesta fit 35mm 14 Color Ambion lens	E49	Minolta SR Angle Finder fit, mint and boxed	E25
Agfa Ambi Siesta fit 50mm 14 Color Teleinar lens	E59	Minolta SR Extension tube set, mint and boxed	E15
Agfa Ambi Siesta with 50/2 8 Colour Solinar lens	E49	Minolta SR100x body, chrome. Nice but meter u/s	E15
Agfa Billy, c.1928. Brown Finish	E59	Minolta SR101 body, chrome, works well, small ding	E19
Agfitek 6x5 SLR with 80mm f3.5 lens, spares or repair	E35	Minolta Weathermatic a 110 camera, VGC	E19
Bell & Howell model 605 Sportster Duo, boxed, nice	E59	Minolta X-9 body, black. Last of the MD mount, boxed	E39
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Bronica ETR 80mm 135mm Zeiss MC lens	E59	Minolta D3000 35mm SLR, with thermometer boxed	E49
Bronica ETR 50mm 12.5 MC Zenitar lens, Very nice	E59	Minilog EC outfit Black EC outfit, chrome VGC	E59
Butcher's Postage Premium 1/4 plate Box SLR kit	E59	Minilog Auto Superex 1000 Black + 50 f1.4 UK model	E119
Canon AE-1, chrome, with 50mm f1.8 SC Breech lens	E19	Minilog Auto Superex 1000, Black + 50 f1.4 US model	E129
Canon EOS camera EH1 plus f1.8 50mm lens cover	E29	Minilog Auto Superex 1000, Black + 50 f1.4 US model	E129
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Contax / Yashica AE fit 24mm 12.5 Mitakon MC lens	E59	Nikon AF 50mm f1.4 Nikkor lens a very nice example	E39
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Darkroom: 50mm f1.4 Minolta E Rokkor lens, boxed	E59	Nikon AF 35-105mm 13.5-4.5 zoom lens, VGC SALE!!	E89
Darkroom: 50mm f1.4 Minolta E Rokkor lens, boxed	E59	Nikon AF 35-70mm 13.5-4.5 zoom lens, VGC	E35
Darkroom: LPL Easel Mask, 14" x 17" nr mint boxed	E59	Nikon AF 70-210mm f4.5 Vivitar Multi Coated Macro	E29
Enlarging Minolta 50mm 1/2.8 CE lens, nr mint boxed	E59	Nikon EM body, plus MD-E winder, All vgc	E35
Enlarging Minolta 80mm 15.5 CE lens, nr mint boxed	E59	Nikon F-801 AF body, a nice example, boxed	E29
Ensign 220 Autorange CRF for 6x8, 75mm ensar, VGC	E79	Nikon F65, silver, with 28-80mm f3.5-5.6 Nikkor lens	E39
Ensign All Distance Ensign box camera, nice item	E59	Nikon F80 body, two in stock in equally nice condition	E49
Ensign Auto Knecam 16mm 1.8mm movie camera, cased	E59	Nikon FA body, chrome, VGC, excellent example	E39
Ensign British Ensign "Flat Back", c.1905, rare	E59	Nikon FG-20 body, chrome, VGC, working well	E49
Ensign Double-8, 16 on 127, c.1903, nice example	E59	Nikon HS-1 metal lens hood, marked for 50mm f1.4	E19
Emmerman Heag 1 plate camera, for 6x8 on plates	E59	Nikon MB-D100 battery grip for D100 plus 2 batteries	E29
Exa, Version 4, c.1957, with 50mm f3.5 T Tessar	E59	Nikon Nikkor 8mm movie camera, VGC, cased	E39
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Gossen Multiflex digital light meter, Good working order	E59	Nikon OM 28mm f2.8 Zulko mint boxed	E49
Hasselblad 2000 B2 back, chrome, matching numbers	E59	Nikon OM 35mm f2.8 Zulko Auto W, excellent	E39
Hasselblad Waist Finder (Focus Hood) one touch type	E59	Nikon OM Auto Extension tube set, 7, 14, 25mm	E39
Kodak No.1 Brownie, 1900 model, with key, finder vgc	E59	Nikon OM black real leather case, VGC	E29
Kodak No.3 Special Kodak, circa 1911, Tessar lens	E59	Nikon OM 28-85mm 14 RMC Tokina zoom lens	E35
Kodak Retina C fit 80mm f4 Xenon, some marks	E59	Nikon OM fit 2x Macro Focusing 2x, mint, boxed	E29
Kodak Retina IIC, with 50mm 2.8 Xenon lens	E59	Nikon OM 28mm f2.8 super example	E22
Kodak Retina Reflex / S fit 135mm 14 Tele Xenar lovely	E59	Nikon MZ-2 AF SLR, complete with 28-80 SMC FA	E29
Kodak Retina Reflex / S fit 28mm 12.8 carlton, lovely	E59	Nikon MZ-7 AF SLR, complete with 28-80 SMC FA	E29
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Nikon Pentax 67 105mm f2.8 Macro lens, black, VGC	E49
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax KAF 200mm f4.5 Telephoto lens + 2x conv	E39
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Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax KAF set of Vivitar high quality extension tubes	E19
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax KAF 28-80mm 13.5-4.5 Tele-Auto-Zoom VGC	E49
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax KAF 35-70mm 13.5-4.5 SMC-A lens, nice quality	E29
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax KAF 40-70mm 13.8-4.8 Vivitar series 1 lens	E49
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Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax M40 105mm f2.8 super example	E22
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax MZ-2 AF SLR, complete with 28-80 SMC FA	E29
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax Pentax 67 105mm f2.8 Macro lens, black, VGC	E49
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Pentax french batisse camera for 6x9 on 620 film	E19
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Polaroid 640 c. 1950 converted for Polaroid FP-2, great fun!	E49
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Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Robot camera mount for Ricoh R1, N & NR available, Each	E10
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Robot camera four screw mount conversion tubes vgc	E25
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Rollei B35, Carl Zeiss Triotar 40mm f3.5, Very Nice	E39
Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Rolleicord V-TLR, with 75mm f3.5 Xenar lens, boxed	E22
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Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Shinano Lacina 35 c. 1950's With 45mm f3.5 Laco lens	E39
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Konica Minolta 135mm 4.5 lens, VGC	E59	Topcon Unimax SLR, with 50mm f2.8 UV-Pronar lens	E39
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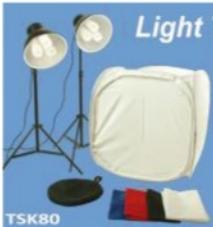
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OGDEN CHESNUTT

Ogden Chesnutt explains why you don't need to be a great photographer to be the best photographer

I MEET Eli on London's South Bank on a gorgeous late-summer Sunday afternoon. We're out to photograph what's likely to be the last good weekend for street photography this year: the families out shopping; couples without children dropping into museums on their way to lunches; market stalls slashing prices; and cafés pulling out all the stops for the last consumer spend of summer.

Then there is Eli and me, two fools with cameras, falling behind the crowds and arguing over f-stops.

'F/11 for everything,' I say. 'It keeps you covered for almost every situation.'

'You and your little rules,' he replies.

And then a situation occurs. A crowd forms outside a small gallery, where a scantly clad, beautiful young woman appears to be edging her way out from an exhibition called *Sleeping Ruff: Portraits of the Homeless Man's Best Friend*.

'Bit tacky, don't you think?' I say.

'Oh, I don't know,' says Eli. 'I thought the one on bankers with their bonus cheques was more offensive.'

'No, I meant that dress she's – wait, that was actually an exhibition?'

'I think so. Or maybe it was just an idea I had. Anyway, you know who that is? She's the one...'

She's one in a long line of people of diverse talents and backgrounds who are slowly but surely depressing the nation and dumbing us down, getting us to accept lower standards across the board, in all facets of our lives. Some are food manufacturers. Some are newspaper editors. Some cowboy builders. Others do other things in their own small, miserable way. She's on a TV show that celebrates being stupid. But she's very pretty. And I bet my local paper would pay good money for a picture.

Eli and I both get the same idea. 'OK, we have to play this cool,' says Eli. 'If we're going to get a picture we have to do this right.'

'Play what cool?' I say, taking off my standard zoom and mounting my 70-200mm. 'She won't even know we're here.'

I put the camera to my eye and zoom in on her face, leaning against a burger van to steady the frame. Suddenly, darkness clouds my lens and then fades, dissipating like a kaleidoscope pattern into a blurred paisley that I recognise as Eli's shirt as he walks away from me.

As he moves into my plane of focus, I see him approach the starlet, drop his camera to his side, show it to her, then hold it behind his back.

He's smiling. He's gesticulating. He's humbling

himself. He's acting like a man I've never met – certainly not the Eli I know.

I lower my camera and watch with some awe as he chats with her for a bit and walks with her to another end of the building, guiding her to a better background. In front of a solid-blue wall, she lets her guard down and looks into his camera. Something he says makes her laugh, and I know right then he's got an amazing shot.

They walk back towards me, and I snap out of my reverie and hurry off a few shots. They pause and part ways, and Eli gives me a thumbs-up. I give him one back. Because he's just taught me something.

Robert Capa famously said that if your photos aren't good enough, then you're probably not close enough. That's true, but I'd go a step further and say that being close enough is more important than being sharp enough or even well-exposed enough. Great photographers know this.

Success has more to do with personality than technical skill. It's not hard to take a picture that looks amazing, but it's hard to take an amazing picture that means something – even if only to a handful of people.

Photographers need people skills. They need to engage with the

public, and by hiding behind a burger van with my super-telephoto I was never going to beat Eli, who was speaking with our subject and getting natural reactions to his camera.

'How did you do it?' I ask as Eli orders a burger.

'I just asked her,' he says. 'No onions, please.'

'But what did you guys talk about?'

'Oh, uh, I just said that, you know, you weren't well and that we both are fans, and you'd love a picture...'

'You told her I was dying!'

'No, just senile,' he says, his mouth full.

In hindsight, maybe great photographers don't need to be likeable, as Eli proves. Maybe you just have to be motivated. Believe your own hype.

All the technical skill in the world means nothing if you don't use it, so take chances and experience life.

We get too caught up in technical precision and forget about the passion. If you make a point to go out and meet people or discover more things that interest you, eventually great pictures will follow. You can always learn how to focus. But you can't learn how to go back in time and capture lost moments.

It's passion for your subject that translates into great images, and if you do it enough it starts to influence how you behave with strangers when you put the camera away. For most of us, anyway. **AP**

'We get too caught up in technical precision and forget about the passion'

An avid AP reader since birth, **Ogden Chesnutt** lives for photography and the sound of a tripped shutter. In the third issue of each month he shares his photographic experiences and thoughts, as well as his adventures with his camera club friend Eli

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